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## Makanna; or Land of the Savage Vol III

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MAKANNA.



# MAKANNA;

OR, THE

## LAND OF THE SAVAGE.

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"I have seen Society under new forms,  
And Nature as at her birth."

ROSE'S LETTERS FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA.

"'Tis to create, and in creating live  
A being more intense, that we endow,  
With form our fancy, gaining as we give  
The life we image."

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

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Second Edition.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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1834.

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MAKANNA ;  
OR THE  
LAND OF THE SAVAGE.

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CHAPTER I.

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“ Away to the dismal swamp he speeds,  
His path was rugged and sore,  
Through tangled juniper, beds of reeds,  
Through many a fen where the serpent feeds,  
And man ne’er trod before.”

MORE.

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THIS was a bitter mandate to the excited Amakossæ, but a moment past absorbed by the spirit-stirring hopes of martial enthusiasm, but the influence of Makanna, after so won-

derful a display of supernatural power, as they imagined the supposed recovery of Dushani to exhibit, at once stilled their stormy passions into acquiescence, and, with averted eyes and heavy hearts, they silently retired.

The last long file of nodding war-plumes was hid in the distant foliage, and the glitter of the 'umkonetos' no longer to be distinguished among the leaves, when, advancing to the spot where his young preserver still maintained his fixed and statue-like appearance, the Chieftain, pressing his hand upon his arm, said, in a low whisper,—“ Follow swiftly, and in silence !”

As to the first particular, Laroon had a fair example, for Makanna, bending back the flexile branches with his weapon, and crashing the more stubborn, broke through an entangled mass of brushwood, that skirted a dark hollow of the forest, with an extraordinary force and rapidity. Having con-

tinued this difficult course for some time, the glen became less encumbered, but more gloomy, until a green and sedgy marsh appeared to debar all further progress.

“What have we here?”—said Laroon, as two or three small alligators plunged beneath the broad floating lotus leaves, on their approach,—“’Faith, here will be no wading for the mud, and no swimming for the rope-like coils of lotus root, to say nothing of the snapping jaws of those infernal alligators!—Which way turn we now?”

“Forward!—Forward!—The path of Makanna is over the bramble, and through the flood, where the foot of man hath not rested, and the Wild-Cat fears to wander! The Puff-Adder draws his slimy coil the closer, and the fanged teeth of the long jawed Crocodile are locked together, they know the voice of the charmer, and are still.”

In the next moment Makanna had dashed into the water, and here wading, and there



swimming, with an avidity as fearless as one of its amphibious inhabitants, had already proceeded to a considerable distance, before his astonished companion had dared to wet a foot. In truth, Laroon began to entertain some most uncomfortable misgivings as to the intention of his mysterious guide. In all before, he had seen nothing more than a lofty enthusiasm, justified by the patriotic object of its daring,—but in thus plunging into one of the pestilential stagnant lagoons of the forest, which the most adventurous hunter would at any time risk his life to avoid, there was, he deemed, a sort of gratuitous folly, altogether incomprehensible. On looking back, the prospect was little better, for the opening they had forced, was so completely reinclosed by the rebounding of the branches, and intertwining thorns, as to appear totally impervious.

The high spirit and natural curiosity of Laroon would not suffer him to ponder long

in such a choice of difficulties ; and, with a mind prepared for the worst, he entered the morass. The sedge and reeds for a broad space in front, choked up the water, except at the particular spot where Makanna had descended, and which had very much the aspect of a track trampled down by some of the larger reptiles. At first, the water was about breast high, but varied afterwards, until, on nearing a spot, where the Chieftain awaited his approach, the main body of the lagoon opened on the view in a long narrow sheet of clear water, dark and deep.

“ Hist !”—said Makanna to his companion, who was about to speak,—“ Hist !—anon ’twere death but to whisper !—The king of the Alligators hath his home in the pit of the waters :—a voice would seem like the fear of a woman, and the charm of the eye would be broken—hist !—There is a demon-light in his glance, brighter than fire. Follow, but in silence.”

So saying, the Chieftain extended his body gently forward, and, striking out with the noiseless deliberate force of a powerful and experienced swimmer, made rapid way. This was an accomplishment in which Laroon was equally an adept, and the exercise would have been delightful, had not the idea of the scaly monster, whose home was in "the pit of the waters," been rather too obtrusive.

The sense of danger in a strong mind quickens all the faculties, and, while gazing with his eyes thus level with the smooth surface of the crystal expanse in which he was suspended, Laroon could not but feel the beauty of the superb scenery, on every side reflected. The very dimness of the light, for the over-arching gigantic branches of the forest still shut out the glare of day, added a softness and solemnity to the impression. Though black as jet, from the decayed vegetable matter which carpeted its bottom, the

water of the lagoon was translucent as glass. Now a shoal of young fish, with delicate pearly bodies, and crimson tinted fins, disported in bubbling circles on the surface, or, diving, vanished in the labyrinth of weeds below. Then, glancing swiftly by, in flashes of an orange, blue, or golden light, some solitary tyrant of the scaly tribe pursued his prey. There a troop of Flamingoes, half resting on the light and arching reeds, bending and springing with each changing impulse of their weight, kept quivering their dazzling vermilion-coloured wings. And then, all at once, from amid the green recesses of the overhanging foliage, as reflected in the depths, the Black Spectre Monkeys, thrusting forward their strange prehensile tails to grasp some neighbouring bough, and mowing at each other, seemed to mock the lonely swimmers on their fearful passage.

Still they swam on in safety and in silence, until a long bright streak of sunny light from

a break in the wood, seemed to promise a happy termination to the adventure, as it fell on a low mossy bank presenting a convenient landing place.

But two minutes, and they had been on shore, when the Chieftain slowly turning round his head, while still advancing, looked back with a glance of defiance, fierce and fixed, as if a mortal foe were hurrying after. There was so much of determined meaning in the action, that Laroon, losing all thought of the Alligator, turned in the same direction with a vague apprehension of an unexpected pursuit from the Amakossæ, when just submerged, and dimly seen like the dusky shadow of a floating log, as if in ambush, appeared the dreadful reptile. His black snout was even with the surface of the water, and the quick heaving of his yellow throat seemed to threaten momentary danger. At least Laroon, though almost equally awe-struck by the withering glance of Makanna, was never more happy

than when the shore was reached; and as at that instant, the monstrous reptile, giving his tail a sudden lash, dived out of sight; he was half inclined to believe on the assertion of Makanna, that the creature had indeed been spell-bound with a look.

“ Yes,”—continued the Chieftain, there’s a power in the life-flash of the eye, to overawe the heart of the cruel:—before it the Lion quails, and the restless scorpion feigns to sleep in the hollow of the tree. But these things are now as nothing: we have past the ‘ *impassable*,’ for so do the Amakossæ call the lake of the black water. They deem its vapour the reeking pestilence, and the dark trees that shade it, to them are as the shadowy depth of a yawning grave. Let it be so—the fears of the ignorant are as the muzzle on the jaws of a tameless dog. The path of our departure will now to them remain a mystery past finding out; and to us

it hath been as the bridge of a short way, and the cutting off of a wearisome distance."

So saying, Makanna led the way through the openings of a straggling chain of detached thickets, until a verdant plain, with a range of lofty mountains in the back ground, stretched out before them in an ocean-like expanse of waving grass. In the distance numerous droves of shy, striped Quaggas were cropping the luxuriant herbage, while a few straggling groups of the small wild horses of the country were here and there visible. Some of the latter with that keen sagacity which freedom inspires, seemed already conscious of danger, and throwing up their heads, were neighing in the wind or galloping around in circles of alarm.

"Our people,"—said the Chieftain, make little use of the 'amahashi,' because his strength is not lasting without rest, as that of a man, nor can he crop the thorn-bush.



as the ox; nevertheless, there are some that have been taught to hearken to the shrill call of a Kossa—should any of these be of the number, it were well; remain here, and it shall be tried.”

Crouching so as to be concealed by the long grass, Makanna now went forward, until within a moderate distance of the nearest group, and then, raising a long strange whistling cry, stood motionless. Recognising the sound, some three or four of the horses stretched out their heads as if listening for its repetition, and on its recurrence, began running right and left in short bursts, and curveting with an affectation of coy reluctance, at last made towards the spot where the Chieftain stood.

In no particular are the Amakossæ more remarkable, than in the care and tenderness with which they treat their cattle, and the docility of the latter is no less striking. Perhaps the protection they obtain from the



wild beasts, of whom they have an instinctive dread, has some influence in this matter, but at all events, the sagacity exhibited far exceeds what a European would expect. Of this Laroon had a striking instance, for no sooner had his companion turned about with a pretended indifference, than three of the boldest steeds running freely up, arched their proud necks, and with wanton snorts seemed to court the outstretched hand.

If the Amakossæ ride but little, they are bold enough when once mounted; and as to their dexterity, nothing more need be said, than that they frequently dash along at full speed, without the use of either saddle or bridle. On this occasion, such contrivances were of course out of the question; and twisting his fingers in the shaggy mane, Makanna was in a moment safely seated on the back of the largest, while he held a second for Laroon. Where there is no choice, men do

more than they anticipate ; and after riding a few yards, the Creole was really astonished to find how far his horse was under command.

“ Leave him to himself,”—said Makanna, —“ as long as he follows his comrade, all will be well. You will find his metal more than enough, and it will only be necessary to flash the ‘umkoneto’ before his eyes, on this side, or the other, when you want to turn.—Pass the ‘ingubo’ in a double fold under the right thigh, take a firm grasp of the mane ; and now, we’re off, like falcons for the mountain.”

The easy low gallop, natural to the horses of Southern Africa, rendered this mode of riding far more endurable than might be imagined ; and, after a little while, Laroon pursued his new career with all the zest of a native. The near approach to the mountains, after awhile, became more and more difficult, but still, as the horses were allowed to choose their own path, but little delay occurred,

and the most fearful ravines were crossed in safety. The animals were, in fact, now doing no more than they had often accomplished, in their own wild courings in search of fresh pastures, and seemed indeed proud of their dexterity.

This rapid riding had continued till evening was fairly set in, with hardly a moment's halt, when Laroon, who had rather too vivid a recollection of the nocturnal attentions he had received from the Hyænas, ventured to ask Makanna, how they might manage to light a fire for the night.

"The night is cooler than the day, and howling jaws thirsting for blood will then be as a goad to the 'amahashi.' We will speed while we may, for with time and fasting their steps will grow fainter. Follow!"

Laroon was aware, that these horses, from the great proportion of dry grass and aromatic herbs that form their food, are singularly lasting, and that it is found best

to ride them long stages at a stretch ; still he did not very well stomach the present arrangement, and again hinted his sense of the danger to be apprehended.

“The night to me, is as the noon brightness!”—said Makanna, about to launch into one of his prophetic rhapsodies, but noting the serious aspect of his companion, he added in a quiet persuasive tone,

“The Macooas, who come from a cold land, seek, in the evening, a shelter under the hollow of the rocks, and on the side of the forest ; and there, too, the Hyænas hunt together, and the Lion hath his lair.—But the tawny children of the Desert love to suck in the cool night-breeze on the mountains, where no beast will roam, because they are empty of life :—and where, in dread silence, the shadows and moonbeams blend in beauty, as the fair form and dark tresses of a virgin bathing in a solitary cave, where her eyes are as stars in the dim light, and

her sighs are as an answer to the murmur of the water."

Even the deep 'witching thoughts of love had lost their potency, and Laroon was about to repay the poetic allusion of his companion by some dry matter of fact observation, when he caught a glimpse of the majestic orb of night, as she rose in full effulgence from behind a group of rifted crags. The horsemen were now slowly surmounting an open down of short grass and moss, that formed the side of a hill, and the cheering promise of sufficient light having banished his former fears, the Creole fell into a more earnest conversation with his new friend, than circumstances had before permitted.

He now heard the details of the defeat which S' Lhambi had sustained, and was informed, that the object of the way-worn messenger was to entreat Makanna, by some counter attack, to draw off the attention of

the English forces from the pursuit of the routed Amakossæ. As the Chieftain was anxious that neither himself, nor the native hordes in his interest, should have any direct share in this ill-omened affair, and equally desirous of rescuing his countrymen from the bayonets of the 'Macooas';—the task proposed was one of no common difficulty.

It has been previously stated, that a sort of mercenary troop, formed of adventurers, runaway slaves, and deserters, had for some time been indirectly protected by Makanna, and on this occasion he was inclined to bring them into play, provided there was reason to suppose that Laroon would consent to become their leader. With this object, the wily Chieftain sought to probe the heart and understanding of his companion in every possible way; nor was the latter loathe to meet him in a spirit as frank as he could desire. The direct object of both was

the same,—to unite the scattered tribes of Caffraria into one great nation; and as to the ulterior political consequences to any European state, whatever might have been the day-dreams of Laroon, they were to Makanna, a matter of altogether secondary interest.

In this conference, the influence of Hugo Drakenstein, and the chance of rendering it available, were points anxiously canvassed. The personal prejudices of old Hugo against the Chieftain, admitted little hope of co-operation, unless the stubborn Dutchman could be placed in a situation so desperate as to leave him without a choice. A plausible plan for this purpose was sketched out by Makanna, but as it involved consequences that might have proved dangerous to Miss Falkland, Laroon betrayed a degree of hesitation and alarm, which were incomprehensible to his companion. For awhile both remained silent, and then foreseeing the



necessity that might arise for some further explanation than inclination prompted, Laroon at once touched lightly on his affection for Bertha, and avowed his determination of studying her welfare on all occasions, and of defending her in case of emergency to the last extremity.

They were at this time traversing a rocky defile so completely immersed in shadow, that the nearest objects were indistinct, yet Laroon imagined that an expression of dissatisfaction passed in sudden paleness over the countenance of Makanna. Presently, on gaining higher ground, the wild Antelope track that served them for a road wound along the ledge of a precipice, and as the moon-beams cast moving figures of the horsemen, with the ridge of broken turreted rocks, down far below in forms of black shadow on the dell beneath, feelings of insecurity, and of awe, stole insensibly on the mind.

“If but a stone gave way,”—said the



Chieftain, pointing down the gulf with his 'umkoneto,'—"those dusky images that mimic us so bravely, would vanish from the picture—and we should be less than the moss we trample, for that hath life!

"The sting of a fly will madden the 'Inglovu,'" (Elephant)—continued Makanna, after a short pause—"and the deep resolves, dangers, and toils of a warrior may become as flowers wreathed in the hair of a young maid, treasured, or cast in the dust at her pleasure!"

There was something in the allusion, and perhaps more in the manner, that to Laroon seemed to imply sarcasm. The lightning flash of anger sparkled in his eye, and he had answered in no very grateful tone, but that Makanna, who read his thoughts with a look, anticipated him by observing:

"The valiant fear not the truth, nor should the heart of Makanna be hidden from him, who hath ransomed its life! behold the

Amakossæ live by stealth in secret places as the Ostrich, and are hunted as Wolves by the 'Macooas:'—for their redemption I have held my life as a jest; and the time is at hand, when their triumph might be accomplished.

“ When in the battle, the gory dust is trampled into clay,—and the pouring forth of life is as water,—shall the liberty of a People perish, because of the jeopardy of a maid ?

“ The virgins of Amakossena are shy as young Antelopes, softer than the bloom of peaches: their anklets clash with a pleasant sound in the dance of the evening, when the air is rich with music, and sweet with flowers, but not so luscious as the whispers of affection, or as the lips of love ! forget the pale beauty of the 'Macooas' with her silky ringlets,—and the full starry wishful eyes of our fairest shall watch thy slumbers as a dove cowering on her nest.”

Fully aware of the profane practice in use among the Amakossæ : viz. that of buying one or more brides if required, for the ‘ consideration of sundry head of oxen,’ Laroon gave up the idea of inspiring his companion with his own exalted sentiments,—still he did not relish the thought of being considered the irresolute vassal of the finest eyes, or the prettiest little feet in the world ; and laboured to disabuse the Chieftain of the dishonouring suspicion that good faith in love could possibly lead to a neglect of duty, either in friendship or in war. Makanna heard him with all the respect due to the man who had saved his life, but still he could not divest himself of the apprehension, that the having so dear an interest in ‘ the enemies’ camp,’ might not lead to some unforeseen disaster.

In another point of view, reflection (for they were now journeying on in silence) served but to increase his anxiety. In personating Dushani, and thus saving the life of

the Chieftain, Laroon had deeply implicated the honour and assumed prophetic character of the latter, were the artifice discovered. These were points far dearer than life to Makanna, as on their preservation depended the success of those patriotic schemes for the liberation of his country, to which his existence had been dedicated. Long and bitter were his cogitations, as a sense of gratitude whispered, that this subject was one, on which his lips must remain for ever sealed, until he remembered, that as the plan originated with Laroon, he was justified in requesting future security, from its consequences.

No sooner had this expedient flashed upon his mind, that the Chieftain urged his companion to give him a pledge of secrecy, with all that wild impassioned eloquence, of which he was so great a master,—but without avail. Though perfectly willing to promise that he would preserve his incognito on every

occasion, that might be serviceable to Makanna, yet he shrunk from the idea of compromising his free agency so far, as not to be able to reveal himself to her he loved.

Finding other arguments useless, the Chieftain now entered into a consideration of the outrages which would ensue on an insurrection of the Boors; and drew so strong a picture of the important protection which the Natives at his instance might, at such a time, extend to Miss Falkland, but which nothing, but a feeling of perfect security, could enable him to grant, that his companion at last unwillingly conceded.

The pledge was, that Laroon should not, on any occasion, by look, or sign, or word, betray his assumed character, 'without the previous concurrence of Makanna : '—thus far all was well, but the oath which the latter proposed, as the ratification of their treaty, was so strangely horrid, that Laroon again started from the proposition.

It was now past midnight, and, having gained a great distance for so short a time, by the skilful selection of a chain of mountain passes known only to himself, the Chieftain was enabled to point out the immense plain of the Karroo, extending like a misty sea in the distance, and to promise that, in a few hours, they might reach its confines.

It was remarkable, that these observations were made in the most free and unembarrassed tone, and without the slightest allusion to the previous conversation. In the same familiar manner, verging, occasionally, to even the racy pleasantry of an old campaigner, the Chieftain descanted on the chance-medley formation of the 'forlorn hope' already alluded to, and pointed out the mountain gorge, in which they lay concealed ; and then, with the keen alacrity of a bold and ready soldier, he detailed the nature of the enterprise he contemplated, and lamented that he could

no longer indulge the hope of confiding the command on that occasion to Laroon.

The love of adventure was a sort of instinct in the Creole, scarcely second to the noble passion that fired his bosom, and the being thus thrown aside in the moment of action, like a shivered sword, filled him with chagrin. His answers were short, moody, and absent, for his thoughts were on the oath:—contracts of the most revolting nature, he had been told, often existed between the bandits of Calabria, in which the honour and life of a virgin mistress were at stake!—but the oath now proposed was something different, —was worse.

His hesitation and disappointment were observed; the topics of military excitement were again artfully introduced; his own utter want of power, to protect the object of his affections, or to avert the storm, which, but for the demur in pronouncing a few short



words, he might direct, were painfully dwelt upon. His objections to the oath itself were stated, as if the most secret workings of his mind were read by intuition ! His irresolution was lamented, till pity wore almost the semblance of contempt, and his own answers became but inverted sarcasms. He grew hurried and angry with himself;—the oath was again proposed, and it was taken.

The awful words had scarcely left his lips, when Laroon, with an involuntary shudder, looked around, for he felt as if the caverned rocks must echo them to the world ! but all was still. The full moon had before covered the waste with a mantle of light, but this was gone ; it had vanished on the instant, and from the clouds that enshrouded her disk, hung a dim curtain of mist :—was this change the omen of evil ?—

He looked forward,—the wild horse and his mysterious rider were considerably advanced, and, as they climbed a rising terrace



of rock, with nothing but the dusky sky beyond, seen amid the drifting vapour, their size seemed unnaturally augmented; the sibilo caught the feeble light, and, clothed in an aspect of savage grandeur, Makanna appeared but too much identified with that ambiguous being, which vulgar report had made him.

## CHAPTER II.

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“ And here, when the night-winds round me sigh,  
And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,  
As I sit apart by the cavern'd stone,  
Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,  
And feel as a moth, in the mighty hand  
That spread the Heavens, and heaved the land,  
A still small voice comes through the wild,  
Like a Father consoling his fretful child,  
Which banishes bitterness, wrath and fear,  
Saying, ‘ man is distant—but God is near.’ ”

PRINGLE.

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THE adventurous journey of Miss Falkland was happily terminated without any farther alarm, by her being placed, according to the orders of Drakenstein, under the care of a Horde of Tambookies, then occupying some hunting grounds to the east of the Karroo.

In the generous hospitality of this noble tribe, as it opened to her observation their social character and national customs, the inquiring and enlightened mind of Miss Falkland would, at any other time, have found a rich field of gratification. But now, though her fortitude survived, her spirits were depressed, and a deep sense of her utter inability to escape from the thralldom of Drakenstein, poisoned every present source of comfort.

The cause of her exile was mysterious, to the extent of painful excitement. What could be the object of "that cold-blooded hypocrite," (as she thought him in her heart,) to remove her at such a time, and with so much artifice? — Without compromising the safety of Laroon, she had long since given the Dutchman such an outline of her story, as she thought would naturally render him desirous of taking her with him to Cape Town on the first opportunity, as a step,

not only of kindness to herself, but as a means of propitiating the favour of the Governor, with whom she shrewdly suspected him to be on no very courteous terms. If old Hugo had been sufficiently in the interest of Laroon, her removal might have had a meaning but too palpable ; there were, however, many circumstances on her recollection proving the reverse. Only one feasible guess remained, and that was, that there was a secret intention of making her the bride of Cootje.

Now it inevitably happens,—by what process of ratiocination let metaphysicians explain, but so it is,—that if you attempt to force the affections of a woman in any given direction, they will immediately fly off at a tangent, and the smile of the dear charmer will settle in another, as naturally as a butterfly on a flower. Nay, more, if the perverse little witch had previously no more sensibility to the softer impulses than a

snow-ball,—no sooner is she advised to tolerate the fond whispers of a judicious suitor with the becoming nonchalance of fashionable life, than, from the very spirit of contradiction, the frozen ocean of her eyes melts at once into a sea of passion, and she loves, or could love, with the endurance of a martyr.

Now, Bertha was a good girl,—a very good girl,—and, dear little soul, had no more idea of *la grande passion*, than the Grand Turk has of female delicacy, until this ugly conceit, of being made the forced bride of “the great bear-monkey,” as the saucy little Mage once nicknamed Cootje, settled like an incubus amid the serenity of her slumbering feelings. As an image in the phantasmagoria grows indistinct with increasing size, so, this annoying suspicion became more vague, and yet alarming, when she asked herself,—Why was the grim-visaged father so studiously silent as to the

merits of his hopeful son?—And, wherefore had the prattling Jewdeth, with her amorous sleepy eyes brimful of mischief, been so intrusively prodigal in his praise?—There was something in all this.—And then, his being kept out of sight during this, the period of her forced seclusion, lest, no doubt, her feelings of disgust should be extended to his innocent self!—And then, after her return, when, the troops having retired, escape would be impossible.—What was to happen then?—The very thought was worse than sacrilege,—was an abomination,—was past endurance.

Really, it is wonderful, when the teeming imagination of an anxious woman is on the wrong scent, how far it will carry her in a rough gallop of vexation, down the road of self-mortifying perplexity.

After all, as Shakspeare tells us, “if women are fair and young, they have the

grace to know it." Beauty, like knowledge, is power;—the consciousness of power gives security; and thus a charming woman is never without consolation. The envenomed arrow of care comes from without, but the balmy antidote of self-adulation is ever ready to assuage its smart. Besides, if female wit is cunningly sedulous in heaping together the elements of uneasiness, it is no less ingenious in the choice of expedients, and fertile in resources of extrication.

The ideal pretensions of Cootje were become a completé bugbear to Bertha, and the sinewy, ungaitly, walking porpoise-like form, with which her angry fancy had invested the really handsome person of the young Boor, seemed ever following at her heels. This was very unpleasant, but as she could not, at once, lay the demon her fears had conjured up, she thought it quite as well to summon a spirit of brighter omen to

comfort her in his presence;—in a word, as she could not avoid thinking of Cootje, she determined to remember Laroon.

It was said on a previous occasion, and truly, that, although not blind to the fond partiality of either, Miss Falkland was equally indifferent, except in the sense of friendship, to both Laroon and Vernon. At that period she was in security, and unassailed by either the thought, or the apprehension of passion, she moved “in maiden meditation, fancy free.” The time, and the circumstances were changed, and she now found herself a prisoner at the unexplained pleasure of an obdurate, yet shrewd fanatic;—and she thought herself in danger from the selfish passion of a rustic debauchee. With the fears, the thrilling sensibilities of woman-hood crowded on her heart, and grown conscious of the influence of her beauty, she felt the weakness of her sex, and the necessity of protection.



The difficulties of her situation were of no ordinary stamp, and her rescue was not likely to be effected unless by the joint agency of unusual prudence, and consummate daring. The former quality was possessed by Vernon, but the latter was the most important of the two, and this in Laroon was a prime element of the soul; was it then wonderful that the indulgent feelings of Miss Falkland were awakened in his favour? If, on the masculine side, it be true, that, 'Pity melts the soul to love,' does not 'manly courage' stamp the passion on the female bosom with the impress of a deity?

From the moment that the heart of Bertha throbbed with conscious emotion, at the remembrance of Laroon, her judgment was summoned to verify its choice. Prejudice is the child of weakness, and knowing this, Miss Falkland did not conceal from herself the faults of her Lover; but having weighed them

duly, she felt secure in the thought that his better qualities redeemed them.

One cloud had indeed arisen during their intercourse, which still left an unpleasant obscurity behind it: her forcible separation from her father. This, she fondly flattered herself, was a sorrow to both, impressed by the fiat of destiny. Laroon, at least, had said so, and she believed him. And then, how far was the mean selfishness, the contrary had implied, foreign to his nature? Had she not seen him struggling, fearless as a sea-bird, at momentary hazard, in the tumbling billows, to save the life of one of the meanest of his crew! How had he exposed himself for the safety of her father, of the whole ship's company, on board the Ganges during the storm. With what forbearing fortitude had he maintained his command over the base and lawless mutineers? With what skilful seamanship had he landed the survivors of the shipwreck? And, more than all, with

what anxious, yet delicate and cautious tenderness, had he anticipated her every wish? On this latter particular Bertha had before felt grateful; but now, as the dawn of passion opened in her own bosom, she became conscious of a thousand instances in which, without at the time understanding their merit, she had witnessed the triumphs of his self-control, when the expression of warmer feelings were subdued in deference to the peculiarity of her unprotected situation in the absence of her father.

These thoughts were delightful, and perhaps the more so from the anxieties of her exile, and from the necessity of hoarding them in her own bosom; for although Mage was faithful and affectionate in the highest degree, she was altogether too volatile and thoughtless, to be the depository of secrets such as these. In the known ardour of her lover's unavowed but long cherished affection, her hopes sometimes luxuriated, until she for-

got the cares around her; but such joyous moments were too frequently dashed by the recollection of the risk he might incur from the open vengeance, but more probably, from the treachery of Drakenstein, in any effort undertaken for her deliverance. With the train of melancholy musings thus induced, the sorrows naturally endured by her father, on her own account, came painfully upon her mind, until she forgot herself, and even Laroon, in the anxieties of filial piety.

Lost in one of these latter reveries, Miss Falkland was now sitting alone on the shady side of a tent which had been pitched for her convenience, just within the boundaries of the 'Umzi.' It was morning, clear, fragrant, and glowing as an eastern sun could make it. From the woody kloofs of a magnificent range of mountains on the right, isolated masses of vapour were now detaching themselves in a thousand fantastic shapes. There, under the shade of a precipice, they

rose in succession, like the expanding sails of a crowded fleet getting under-way before a surging breeze. And there, in soft ethereal sunlit amber tints, after drifting slowly from a varied ocean of foliage, they lingered for awhile, as with a fond reluctance, on the craggy summits, until growing every instant more rarefied and fleecy, they melted in the sultry glare.

Almost at hand, were scattered bushes of the Ceylon rose, relieved by the dark elegant foliage of the kaffer-bean, with clusters of scarlet flowers glowing in the leafy shades, as coral groves, amid the caves of ocean.

Just beyond, where the sunny gleams glanced with a fitful radiance among the pendent boughs of the evergreen oak, and the proud sumach, the callow young birds, fluttering in their nests on the extreme twigs, were cawing for their food. On the larger branches, troops of monkeys lay basking in indolent luxury, and apparent security, as they trailed their limbs and exposed their

white-starred breasts to the sun in every whimsical attitude.

The cheerful converse and songs of the Natives, now busied in tending their lowing herds, arose in a confusion of merry sounds at a little distance; and nearer still the shrill laugh of Javan, mingled with a charm of infantine voices, as some of the Tambookie youngsters with whom he was bathing, floundered over head from the floating 'hout-pard,'\* or wooden horse, on which he was teaching them to ride.

The scene was in every sense joyous and exhilarating, but Bertha felt it not; unconscious of the sunlit glades, and exulting sounds of life around, her thoughts were consecrated to the dark unfathomed depths of the whelming ocean over which her bereft father was then but too probably pursuing a forlorn voyage to what would prove, as once in a

\* 'Hout-pards,' logs of willow, with which the natives manage to cross the deepest rivers.

melancholy mood he termed it,—“no more than the land of his grave!” She was pale, as in the midnight interview with Drakenstein; and there was too, a marble-like stillness in her features, as leaning on her hand she shrouded her eyes from the light, that spoke of grief more eloquently than words.

Her despondency was observed by Mage, who was just then approaching; but with a delicate tenderness she affected not to have noticed it, and dancing forward, in the assumed character of a Tambookie maiden, she exclaimed, with a coaxing musical intonation of voice,—

“Barselee!—Barselee!”

Bertha raised her eyes, and a smile gleamed on her lips, but her thoughts were still absent.

“Barselee!—Barselee!”—reiterated Mage, skipping from one side to the other, with the arch avidity of her nut-brown prototype—  
“Barselee!”



“Barselee!”—repeated Bertha, arousing her faculties with a good-natured effort,—“I really forget the meaning of the word.”

“Dear me, ma’am! I’m sure I never hear them say any thing else, but ‘Barselee’—‘Give me, Give me.’—Dear me!—I shall never forget what a fluster they’ve put me in. At first there were at least a dozen bouncing girls dancing round me all at once, and singing ‘Barselee’ in a chorus; the very gingling of their bangles, and the rattling castinet-like clatter of their anklets, made me dizzy with noise. And then too, the odd kilt-like petticoats! and their soft brown complexions, shining as polished bronze; and their naked legs without stockings, so shocking and so queer:—Dear me! they made me laugh till I could not stand any longer, and down I fell in the grass—you know, ma’am, I often do.”

“Yes,” replied Bertha,—“and a very childish trick it is.”

“Dear me! I’m sure I thought so then,



for like a swarm of bees they all settled on me at once. Their hands were in fifty places before I could catch a breath. One stole the combs from my hair, another the brooch from my kerchief,—and one slim roguish little thief, twisting round me like an eel, had the impudence to take the very sandals from my feet! who knows what might have happened, for they seemed to think that I ought to wear nothing more than themselves. Dear me! I was frightened out of my life, and squeaking like a scalded cat, I jumped up, as if I'd been sitting on a thorn:—they thought I was really hurt, tho' they couldn't fancy how,—and then they were so sorry, and so kind, and looked so handsome with their blushing eagerness, and soft glancing eyes, that I couldn't find in my heart to be angry. Dear me!—they thought that laughing was consent—but I got them to give me every thing again.”

“ Not quite all,”—said Miss Falkland,

with a significant smile, and not a little amused by the history of her damsellet's whimsical mal-adventure—"Not all!"

"No not quite, dear me! I'd forgotten my back comb was broken, and then one of them plaiting my hair like her own, into glossy bands, fastened it up with porcupine quills, and wreathed it round with wild flowers sweeter than otto of roses."

"These kind hearted nymphs of the forest have indeed a happy taste in matters of ornament, and are so innocently full of fun and frolic, that I sometimes fancy, Mage, 'twould be almost a pity for you to leave them.—Now if a handsome young 'Incos'\* should seek you as a bride, at how many 'head of oxen' shall I strike the bargain?"

"Dear me! ma'am, don't whisper a thought so horrid! the bare idea brings a

\* 'Incos,' a Chief.

cold dew upon my forehead :—why, I protest I never see one of the great he-things, but what he puts me in mind of the Major's bronze figure of Hercules, that used to stand in the temple of Neptune, at Calcutta !—their very flesh seems harder than iron-wood."

"But to be the envy of a whole 'Umzi' of brown beauties, Mage!—to glitter like a peacock with a cincture of many coloured beads; to wear an 'inkyō' (apron) of vivid tiger-cat's skin, a tasty 'ingubo,' (mantle) formed from the soft hide of a blue-antelope! to say nothing of bangles, and anklets, the little polished tortoiseshell filled with aromatic seeds, or the superb canopy of Ostrich and Flamingo plumes, that would shelter you in walking from the sultry glare. Consider, child, are such temptations to be resisted?"

"Were I rooted to the spot as the trees,"—replied Mage, with a mock solemnity—

“ and were these haughty savages all that the fond deluded female heart ever dreamt of a man ! I wouldn’t marry one of them for an empire !

“ Dear me !—the only idea that would ever allure me into the folly of wedlock, would be the hope of plaguing the conceited he-thing to death for his vanity !—and here, there’d be no chance of that, for as the men are allowed to have more wives than one, and no two women can ever agree, I should not have my own way for a week, and should die of vexation in a month.”

“ Well, well,”—said her Lady—“ what news have you gathered, Mage ; did Stunted Mic get wounded in his attempt to escape last night ?”

“ Oh dear no, ma’am, only bruised. The Hottentots say they watched him from behind the bushes, and, by yelping like a troop of jackals, drove him into a track, where there was a pitfall, into which he tumbled head-

long, to bear company with a famished wolf, that had been there these three days. But the oddest thing of all was, that the wolf did not offer to bite him, as if he'd been like any other man ; but both of them sat in the dark corners of the pit, with their eyes fixt on each other, as if at a loss to know which was the ugliest:—But, dear me ! that's not half so strange as what our Hottentots tell of the great 'man-witch' of the Amakossæ, who travels no one knows how, for nobody must follow him, and nothing else but a hawk can make the distance in the time. They told me all the places, and every thing about it ; and they say, too, that perhaps he may be here to-morrow, for there has been a terrible battle ! and if he does not stop the enemy with a charm, as he did the locust flight last season, the whole nation of the Amakossæ will be rooted up !—those were their very words. Dear me, I should never believe in 'real magic' in a christian

land, where there was the sound of a bell, but who can say what may happen in such a heathen wilderness as this ! And then, the battle can be no mistake, since some soldiers' jackets, that had been taken from the dead bodies, were brought in last night, and two knapsacks :—Dear me ! I could not help staying to see them opened, and then I could not see for crying, for, there was a bundle of letters, all directed for “ Thomas Brown, of the Grenadier Company.” —I hope the poor dear young man has been decently buried,—for he had numbered those letters so neatly, and tied them up so carefully, with a pink ribbon ; and they were all so full of love, and good advice, for reading the prayer book, and not wearing damp linen, and all signed in such a pretty slender hand :—

“ So no more at present, from your

Loving Friend till death,

GRACE MEDLEY.”

That the chaplain of the Regiment might have read them from the pulpit. Ah, dear me ! there's many a sad lesson to be learnt after a battle. The Hottentots, poor ignorants, were afraid to touch the paper, when they saw me crying, lest there should be a spell in the writing ! so the letters are safe. But there were some other things ; a piece of pipe-clay, a little brush, some spare flints, and a canteen. I did not so much mind for these, but there was something else, though not found in the knapsack, that I was sure the Hottentots would spoil, as they said they wanted to find out how a "long-looker" was made, so I slipt it at once into the reticule, and here it is."

So saying, Mage produced one of the small pocket telescopes, frequently carried by Field Officers, when on service.

The eye of Bertha fell upon it with indifference, but, in a moment after, a deathly paleness overspread her countenance, she



seized it with eager trepidation, gazed intently on a name engraved upon its outward slide ; and then, as staggering towards the tent with a deep suffocating effort, she whispered to the affrighted Mage,—

“ It was my Father’s—he is no more—  
I am indeed an orphan ! ”



## CHAPTER III.

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“ Whereat a narrow Flemish glass he took,  
That erst belonged to Admiral De Witt,  
Admired it with connoisseuring look,  
And with the ripest claret crown’d it ;  
And, ere the lively head could burst or flit,  
He turned it quickly nimbly upside down,  
His mouth being held conveniently fit  
To catch the treasure : “ Best of all the town,”  
He said, smack’d his moist lips, and gave a pleasant frown.”

KEAT'S MS.

“ Oh, what a beast is a niggardly ruffler,  
Nabbing, grabbing, all for himself ;  
Hang it, old fellow, I'll hit you a muffler,  
Since you won't give me a pinch of the pelf.”

PAUL CLIFFORD.

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THERE is more philosophical meaning, than  
even thinking men are wont to allow, in  
what are called “ vulgar prejudices,” and

that of the Africanders against but the least exposure to rain, childish as it seems, may be of the number. Those who have ever been in Egypt, cannot but remember the deathly chills, and rackings of the joints, inflicted by the night fogs of the Nile. In both instances, doubtless, a considerable portion of what should be latent electricity, is withdrawn from the body, thus suddenly exposed to the action of a humid, conducting, relaxing medium, instead of the usual non-conducting dryness of a tropical atmosphere.

The rains in the open parts of Southern Africa are quite of the deluge class. A positive out-pouring of the heavens, in which the water falls in sheets; and the periodical diurnal storms, occurring in some of the mountainous districts, seem to be attended by the distribution of an unusual proportion of aqueous vapour, as the lightning, frequently present in both instances, is never forked,

but distributed over the heavens in such a contiguous succession of flashes, as to keep them in a universal blaze of pale blue light, and that for long intervals of time. During such visitations, the reptiles are the only ‘gentlemen at large,’ all other living things skulking out of sight. The beast seeks his lair, the Hottentot and Kaffer their bee-hive-looking huts. The ‘Bosjesman’—self and family—coil up their pigmy forms, like so many Hedgehogs, in a nest, as round and as real as the Woodpecker’s; formed of the same materials too, viz. dried leaves, moss, and wool, and lodged, for lack of better security, in the very centre of a thornbush, or in the inward dark hollow of a cavernous rock.

Whether from philosophical intelligence, or vulgar conceit not an Africander in the land, had a more genuine aversion to the fattening ‘drippatations’ of the clouds than our quondam friend, Hugo Drakenstein.

Could his will have been accomplished, it would have been contented with nothing less than a Noah's ark sort of dwelling, in which the whole of his live stock might have been housed water-tight with their 'Meester;' but as this was impossible, he was obliged to satisfy himself, by driving the dogs, and "those more sulky heathen cattle," as he was wont to call the Hottentots, at once to 'kennel.'

This horror of rain, he had, with a sort of religious fervour, most carefully instilled into every immediate member of his family. Young Cootje had received it as it were with every spoonful of his pap; and, though bred in other respects hardy as a lion's whelp, he became so sensitive of rain, that if from home, no sooner was the tip of his nose saluted with the preliminary drop of a coming shower, than he made for shelter, with the alacrity of a hunted squirrel, and felt as much inward satisfaction in being housed, as an old maid with a new brocade,

endangered by the villanous black drippings of the eaves, when returning from a 'love-feast' in Tabernacle Row. Yet, after all, verily, the aversion to rain, however vulgar, would have been found a right human sort of instinct by most men on the occasion with which we have to do.

The clouds had been pouring forth without mercy for some four or five hours, when old Hugo ventured to open his door just so far as to catch a glimpse of the weather without; and murky enough it was; for, although it wanted an hour to sun-set, the light was hardly sufficient to show his hand. Long and anxious was the Dutchman's recognizance of the elemental war; and, at last having concluded his observations with a knowing shake of the head, as if in sympathy with no very pleasant recollection, he closed the door, shot home its heavy bolts, and resumed his former silent paces of the 'voor-kamer.'

Here, his meditations might be supposed

to have had ample scope, for, except the ceaseless pattering of the rain, and, now and then, the low distant surgings of the wind, notwithstanding that the family were present, all was still as the grave.

The good people were indeed too busy for the vanity of words. At the upper end sat the 'Vrouw,' in all the glory of contented obeisity. Stretched out before her, on the tall back of an old cane chair, (itself a sort of heir-loom in the family,) was the superior portion of an equally ancient damson-coloured velvet suit of the 'Meester's,' while some awkward rents and outbreakings of the unnameable portion of the said august habiliments, were being refitted by her condescending fair hands, not as it seemed altogether unlearned in the 'sartorial' art:

Somewhat to the right of her mother, but sufficiently in the back-ground to escape her notice, sat the gentle Jewdeth, the very beau ideal of slumbering indolence; her

plump rotundity most comfortably borne up, or rather cradled, in the swag of the thongs that formed the back and seat of her roomy chair; and, ever and anon, her drowsy head reclining on one of the most luxuriant bosoms in the world, with irregular noddings, as if in accordance to the loud purrings of a cat, proportionably fat, and equally lost, as she lay sleeping between the knees of her indulgent mistress, in the somniferous delights of idleness.

A few yards further off, young Cootje might be dimly descried through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, now giving animation to a prime cigar, knowingly tucked in one corner of his mouth, and then, stirring up a chaufferette of live charcoal with an old ramrod; and as totally absorbed by his two-fold occupation, as if studying the theory of combustion. Three Hottentots rolled up in their 'carosses' were lying within call, under the opposite wall, and probably asleep;



while an empty wine-flask, and some half-dozen ill-matched glasses on the table, bore evidence that the party had ere-while been more actively employed.

The paces of old Hugo, to and fro, were measured with almost mathematical precision, and he had attained to the turning of about the hundred and ninety-ninth, when, the overflowings of the storm having at last forced a leak in the roof, a jet of water came whizzing in, with the bounce and the blow of the first workings of a parish-engine. Broken in its fall, the cascade divided its favours in various directions. The poor cat, screeching with horror, took a spring of some dozen feet ; and, thrown off the equipoise of her *gravity*, the astonished Jewdeth presented a spectacle that might have been fatal to that of a judge!—The half-extinguished chaufferette began hissing like a legion of serpents ; and Cootje, who, in the first alarm, had snatched up his sambok, smacked



it with a force that might have awakened the seven sleepers!

“Massa too big hurry!—what Massa no like de nasy rain all spit bout de kamer, den me climb up an stop de tam ugly mouth!”

No sooner said than done; in the next moment the merry old Hottentot was straddling across a rafter, and having thrust two-thirds of a huge ham, that hung near, into the unlucky breach, all was well again. The serenity of the party, however, was not to be so easily restored; the fair Jewdeth was almost in tears from an unfortunate bump received just on the critical site of the organ “number one,” of the phrenological system; and Cootje. was mumbling “curses not loud but deep,” over a box of cigars, all rendered unfit for present service.

“The Lord be praised, it’s a gracious rain!”—said Drakenstein in an under tone, while the deluge without gave evidence of increasing violence.

“ Rare and ‘gracious’ for a brood of young Ducklings, Caymen, or the spawn of Bullfrogs; but what the Duyvil good can be in damp beds, or the ruination of seven gross of as prime cigars as ever warmed a fellow’s throat!—‘Gracious,’ humph!”

“ Loud words are but as the clack of an empty mill:”—replied the father with a frown, too well understood to be trifled with.

“ ‘Faith for the matter ’o that,”—exclaimed the thrifty Wilmena, whose temper had been sadly ruffled by the luckless catastrophe of her daughter,—“ what could any man expect who sent his son to learn manners o’ that goatish old sinner, Van Riesbeck?—what indeed but that he’d come back to make a mock an’ a drollery of his own flesh an’ blood! ‘The nearer the kin, the greater the jest!’ ”

“ Peace!”—roared Drakenstein in a voice of thunder.—“ Cootje, come hither, lad.—The green corn after toping bears the heavier ear.—Come hither!—Thou know’st, lad, the Eng-

lish Dragoons are on the route, and like enough to make free quarters at Zee-koe-Gatten.”—His eye fell on Jewdeth.—“ Yes, the booted, belted, sons of Belial are too like to ride rough shod over my hopes and my prospects!—I say, boy, ’tis a ‘ gracious rain,’—a rain in season,—a rain that shall make the ways too deep and slippery for our enemies!—and one that shall give us a chance of planting a harvest of joy, I mean of burying our cash and our treasure in the earth, boy, out of sight!—I say the rain is gracious.”

“ Plague take the pistol-popping roysters, with their big carving-knives, and wine-gulping throats, so that the rain stops them, I’ll say so too. But, Father, just think, the river fords will be like seas, and the jungles no better than bogs; as for hunting, a man will not have a better chance of finding ground for his horses’ hoofs than Noah had for sending his out to grass from the ark.

“ And all the better!—thy Mother’s right, Cootje:—hunting is but a vain glory of the carnal creature,—there’s more profit to be got out of a score of lean oxen, than from the heaviest elephant that ever carried wood in his forehead.\*—Why what was the luck of the last hunt?—did not the Sea-Shark, as you call him, give you the slip?—and who can say but that he’s now with that <sup>†</sup>Manasseh of the gentiles, Makanna?—Ah, will he not then be as a young Crocodile going to the war with an old Dragon? answer me that.”

“ I wish I could answer every thing else as easily,”—said Cootje, laughing:—“ the man’s horse, gear and all, was caught but the other day on the mountains, and the Hyænas have picked the Meester’s bones long since to a certainty. ‘ Shark’ or ‘ Crocodile,’ there’s not even a skin left for stuffing.”

\* The Africanders ascribe infinite virtues to a small dark coloured substance like a fragment of thorn, or black wood, found in an elephant’s forehead.

“ Well, well ! let that pass,”—said Hugo : —“ but the smooth-faced, silver-tongued gentleman, the youth Vernon, he hath given us the go-by, too !”

“ Yes, he was like to be a ‘ child of Grace !’ and so you trusted him to run about by himself, like a pet-lamb, till at last he gambolled out of sight !—Well, I expect he’ll be for showing those plaguy Troopers the trick of the road when they want to visit the ‘ Zee-koe-Gatten,’ if so, let him keep clear of my roer, that’s all !”—said Cootje, taking a bullet from his pocket and tossing it in his hand.—“ He’s a scholar, forsooth ; ‘ faith, I’ll prove an ounce of lead too heavy for his brains in the lump.”

“ Remember your own proverb, ‘ never shoot on the dash,’ Cootje. The smell o’ the powder lies when the smoke’s blown ; and so doth repentance linger when the fire of anger is no more !—What doth the Captain, or the other, matter when we have the Lady safe as a singing bird in a cage ? Ah, Cootje, lad,

when I listened to your worldly talk, as to the reward that the Major, her father, might offer, and of the giving her up as a Dove sold in the market for lucre; I was then no wiser than the gnat that flieth at the flame! The Major is old; and if he would now give part of his substance to recover his child, when he is gathered to his fathers ‘shall she not have it all?’”

“ Listen, I have pondered the matter in the watches of the night, and my mind hath been as warm wax for receiving the impress of the signs that shall reveal the measure of her incoming and outgoing.—The maiden shall tarry in the land!—Start not, but be silent; there is a pride in her heart, yet not of her beauty, though that is great, but rather that she hath fortitude to suffer. This time will fret away even as running water saps the rock, and then, shall she not be led, even as a child, and would I not be to her as Boaz was to Ruth!—Nay, take shame to thyself, lad, for the folly of that smile:—I mean not

as a helpmate—for is there not thy Mother!—but that I would graft the gentle one on a stock, were it but worthy, from which many a goodly branch might arise, to the building up of our Israel.”

“ Yes,”—said Jewdeth, who had listened to the latter part of her Father’s mystical harangue, till her eyes glistened with the over-flowing satisfaction of her heart—“ Yes, Cootje, you’d be happy indeed, had you so lovely a creature for your bride; oh, I wish you may, for I could kiss her out of breath, were it but for the sweetness of her smile, the music of her voice, the tender flowing grace of her form, or the—oh gracious, what’s that?”

“ The neighing of a horse as I live!”—exclaimed Cootje—“ Hark! the clatter of hoofs comes mingled with the wailings of the storm.”

“ The armed men compass us about as the fowlers snare the quails in the stubble:—verily, we will lie close as heath cocks in



withered grass :—cover the light ! It is dark, exceedingly, and may-hap, they will gallop by !”

“ Ay, douse the light !”—cried Cootje.

In a moment the huge wick of twisted rags, immersed in a pot of tallow, that served for a lamp, was extinguished ; and even the chaufferette covered over with a hide. All was black as Erebus, while in the silent gloom, the hollow surges of the storm seemed louder and fiercer.

“ May the judgment on Pharaoh King of Egypt overtake them at the next ford :”—whispered Drakenstein, “ they have passed us by, but as haply they may return, it behoveth us to seize time by the forelock. Give me a hand with the money-chest, and above all the gunpowder and weapons, we will store them in the corn-pit, even in the middle of the house.”\*

\* The ‘ Indian corn ’ keeps best when buried in the earth, and the Kaffers, for this purpose, have pits in their cattle ‘ Kraals.’



A loose carpeting formed of platted thongs of hide, was immediately drawn aside, and a rude sort of hatchway exposed. This being raised by the glimmer of the charcoal fire, while the chaufferette was opened on one side for the purpose, the articles alluded to were speedily delivered to the safe keeping of the earth, and Cootje was on the point of letting the ponderous trap-door fall into its berth, when his Father, having motioned the rest of the family aside, laid his hand upon the arm of his son.

“Hist!—Cootje, lad, I would not scare the women—but doubtless the Philistines will return and make a bondsman of thy Father, until at least the day that Miss Falkland is rendered into their hands:—Now listen, I have a thought, that shall be as a blind to their eyes, and a snare to their feet:—Get thee down into the hole, Cootje, and lie close until after their departure. In the mean time I will feign to be won over, and will be their guide to the wilderness; but

after that, when we are returning with the Lady, and they are grown careless with success; then Cootje, 'twould be an easy thing for thee to break in upon their guard, and to wrest the Maiden as a spoil from the mighty!—It shall be done! get thee quickly into the pit, it shall be done!”

The adventurous nature of the project was quite in accordance with Cootje's taste; but, as he saw his Father so strenuously set upon its execution, he thought it a good chance to break the ice on another point, where he had hitherto been inexorable. Thus after acceding to the preliminaries, and receiving full instructions, he still stood with his head provokingly protruded above the opening, while Hugo remained waiting with the half-closed door in his hand, until the sound of galloping horses had again thrown the family into confusion.

“Oh! the wilfulness of youth,”—exclaimed Drakenstein, half tempted to let the timber-

frame fall on the head of his obstinate son, "Oh, the stiff-necked folly of those that will not execute counsel!—Get thee down, Cootje;—the Troopers are at hand, they climb the wall!"

"No help for that, Father,—I've just been thinking the gun won't throw the shot home!—I mean that I shall fail in the long run without your consent."

"Consent to what?"—said Hugo, gnawing his lip with impatience, for the voices of the Dragoons were then audible in the yard.

"Why, only that I may get the protection of Makanna!—my life on such a venture were not worth a pan-flash without!"

"The boy's mad!"—cried Hugo, turning pale with passion, and looking towards the door.

"Well, Father, the Prophet Chieftain of the Amakossæ could make the thing safe, and none else! I'll not make ducks and drakes of my young life, without the chance

of being well backed;—will you pass the word,—shall I follow the hunters' fashion, and league with Makanna?"

Drakenstein stood irresolute; the popularity of the Chieftain among the young Boors was what he had long dreaded on account of his son; still it was very possible that the connivance of Makanna might ensure the success of his plan; but again was he not a 'heathen,' a 'magician,' and accurst!"—Hugo was just about to refuse, when the thundering slam of a pistol hilt on the door gave fresh energy to his desire of circumventing the foe, and in a low surly whisper he replied:

"Well, the wit of the wicked shall for once be as a stirrup to the godly! take thy own way, Cootje, but remember lad, go not too far;—the Duyvil loves not to work, but for such wages as 'twere a sorry thing for thee to pay.

"Ay, get thee down. Now, then, the

swaggering bullies' may stave in the old oak panels when they list!"

The permission was not granted a moment too soon, for, as the darkness gave the soldiers a notion that resistance was intended, they were inclined to make short work of the matter; and two or three, dashing the heavy butts of their carbines on the upper corners of the door, the hinges gave way, and it fell rattling on the floor.

"Stand back, Tom, all's black as Beelzebub's best parlour; odd's blood, lend me a flash, this Bengal light shall give us a chance o' seeing what funny rig the Dutch bloaters are up to:—My eyes, here goes—tumble in boys, hurrah!"

This eloquent prelude was hardly ended, when the volcanic glare of a blue light flashed its lurid radiance over the 'voor-kamer,' and, sword in hand, fifteen Dragoons dashed in among the inmates.

The order given, had been to make pri-

soners without bloodshed, and the latter particular was very laudably attended to. The thing was, however, done slap-dash; and, as there was no being very nice, at the moment, in distinguishing sex, &c. some droll absurdities ensued. Thus, two gigantic, be-whiskered, be-pistolled, troopers, with their red cloaks flying, had fastened, with the grasp of a vice, one on each arm of the fair Jewdeth, before they had time to perceive that their shrieking captive was a woman! The comely Wilmena had fared no better; for, not relishing the rather turbulent touch of her martial assailant, she had ventured on the negative resistance of a fall, and, by sheer advantage of ponderosity, had borne him to the earth before her, where, close packed in panting endurance, he lay beneath a mountain of flesh, to which "Ossa were a wart."

As for Drakenstein, it not being his "cue to fight," he stood in silence, stiff as a ramrod,

and suffered the stupid lout, that chance had awarded as his captor, to bind him back to back with one of his own Hottentots, as if the affair had been a jest, and his body senseless as a truss of hay.

All thought and chance of resistance was over, and the afore-mentioned flaring tallow apology for a lamp, again in the full splendour of its effulgence, when the young Lieutenant, who commanded the party, made his appearance. Now, the gallantry of British officers is very justly proverbial all over the world, in more senses than one !—But it must be confessed, that this identical votary of Bellona was somewhat of an exception. Fancy a little insignificant, cream-faced puppet, with the high shoulders of an ape, and the swagger of a turkey-cock, and you have his picture before you ;—but why should we waste words on such an animal, when Hotspur has described the whole genus, of whom this manikin was but a degenerate item, the shadow of a shade :—



“ I do remember, when the fight was done,  
When I was dry with rage, and extreme toil,  
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,  
There came a certain Lord ! neat trimly drest,” &c.

“ Mynheer !” lisped out the little officer, in a most small voice, while a dragoon ‘in-orderly,’ at either side, was engaged in relieving him from the fearful weight of his wet cloak, and a third swung his cap, to shake off the rain, but with no great success, for the feather still clung together like the lank tail of a white cat.

“ Mynheer !—favour me with a glass of your real skeidam, without the loss of a second !—and hark’ee, Sirrah ! let the chambermaid, or what other name you may chance to have for your female lumber, prepare me a warm bed, and an egg posset, by the time Sergeant Jones has relieved me from these infernal boots. Faugh ! no man makes a boot like Hobby :—’Faith I’ll write to Cape Town, if I send a Troop with the letter, and order some by the first sail to Europe.



“ Come, come, gently Jones, don’t forget the corn on the second toe of the left foot. D—n your clumsy fingers, d’ye fancy, man, I’m a second Hercules, or that you’re shoeing your heavy restive mare ?—gently.

“ Fore Jove, the rain has washed the very soul out of my body, and yet not a drop of any cordial’s to be had ;—they told me this Boor had the best skeidam out of Holland, and now I may die for a glass ! Hark’ee, Sirrah !—You rascallion Dutchman !”

And now, for the first time, condescending to raise his eyes from his own elegant person, towards the object of his address, the redoubtable Lieutenant Pearlham observed, that the awkward sort of durance, in which Drakenstein had been placed, rendered it altogether impossible for him to obey his command.

“ Jones, what the Devil of an oversight !—How the deuce can the Dutch Gentleman wait on me as he ought, while he’s tied up like a thief to the back of that scabby

hound of a Hottentot?—Zounds, your fellows, Jones, are more stupid than the gaping waiters at Long's, who don't sleep an hour in the week!—By Jove, I'll make an example somewhere, if these 'essentials' of my comfort are not better looked to!—

“So, Mynheer, as you see, those rough fellows altogether mistook orders, you'll bear no grudge, but get out a keg of the right skeidam. And mind, old Boy, I shall have you forced, ‘*à la militaire*,’ to swallow two bumpers for every glass I may condescend to sip—so look, you turn out the best, or one of us will run a prime chance of being poisoned!—Come, come, Man, look about! I'm too dry in the throat to speak!—Yes, yes, send those two fat ladies to make my bed ready.

“Fore Jove! my knees are confoundedly cramped from being jammed so long against wet holsters. Come, look alive, old Dad;—remember, I've installed you into the honour-

able office of 'Butler Extraordinary to the Most Noble Captain Pearlham,' whose splendid talents are now devoted to the Foreign Service of His Britannic Majesty!"—so saying, the pink of all Lieutenants dropped into the pillowy arms of the Vrouw's easy chair, with the lightness, if not with the grace, of 'the feathery messenger of Jove.'

The feelings of such a man as Hugo Drakenstein on this occasion may be better imagined than described. Whatever they were, the politic Dutchman had them so completely under mastery, that, had his guest been really a man of discernment, they had remained in oblivion. As it was, the dainty Lieutenant found himself at a loss which to admire most, the fragrance and rich amber tint of the skiedam hanging to the glass, as if coyly reluctant to surrender its treasures to the lips, or the glib compliments and obsequious smiles of the host.

The subtle spirit tingling through his

veins, inspired a renovated glow of manhood, and in the giddy hilarity of the moment, Pearlham even went so far, as to invite old Hugo to be seated ! and while humming an opera tune, had succeeded in the perilous experiment, considering her weight, of drawing the plump Jewdeth on his knee ; Yes, squeaking like a guinea-pig, blushing and laughing, the young hoyden had lost her breath in the struggle, when the blast of a bugle threw the whole party on the ‘*qui vie.*’

As if stung by a wasp, Lieutenant Pearlham was on his feet in a moment ; and in the next, having wiped the dews of excitement from his brow, and the trickling overflowings of the skiedam from his chin, he began pacing the floor with his best frown of martial importance.

The bugle-call was immediately explained by the tramplings of fresh horsemen from without, and directly after a gentleman of commanding aspect, in an undress military

costume, attended by some fine veteran looking soldiers, entered the 'Voor-kamer.'

"Pon honour, Vernon, devilish glad to see you at last; come, my fine fellow, don't look out of humour, you must perceive that I've every thing in readiness for your arrival. Fore Jove! we 'military men' have, after all, the happiest knack of inspiring the virtue of hospitality; as for valour, that you know we hold by instinct, and for the rest, let the 'black-coats' keep them, and make the most of their bargain.

"Faith, a single glass of this prime skiedam drove all memory of weariness and weather from my brain, before there was time to pour out the second.—What, dumb as a fish! By Jove, follow thy humour, but if you'll take advice, we'll have a feast of the gods to-night:—this nectarean skiedam shall be our passport to Elysium!—let me see:—you love the ocean, so you shall be Neptune, I'll be Apollo myself,—and this breathing

bundle of lilies and roses, this virgin 'Vrouw' shall be our Hebe!

"Ah, I know how it is, you're thinking that my particular friend, the Dutchman here, will spoil sport,—bah!—you were never more out in your life. A prime old cock, that—a good fellow at bottom. Fore Jove, we'll give him a glass of his own, and let him join mess under the cognomen of Vulcan! so that the thought of the unlucky mishap of his prototype may keep him in order."

A single glance towards the 'most noble Captain Pearlham,' was sufficient evidence of his 'elevated' condition; and passing forward, Vernon said in an undertone to Drakenstein,—  
"Mynheer, when last we met, my anxious inquiries for Miss Falkland were trifled with and evaded—it can be so no longer, here is a written order from the Governor, which you will see the necessity of obeying; and without wishing to be harsh, it is no less than my duty to inform you, that 'martial law' has

been proclaimed, and that unless the Lady is immediately surrendered in accordance with the instructions of his Excellency, ‘military execution’ will be done upon yourself, and your property confiscated.”

“The taking of my life were but as putting the sickle to the ripe corn!—nevertheless, they that would dig a pit for the feet of the righteous, shall not prevail!—the ear of the Governor hath been abused with cunningly devised fables, or he would have had respect to the gray hair of Hugo Drakenstein!—If a place of refuge was sought for the Lady, was it not well?—and was a youth of green age to be entrusted with such a secret?—surely it had been unwise. The matter is so no longer;—her safety hath been well cared for, and I will myself be a ready guide to the place of her concealment;—Yea, and render her into the charge of the armed men of the Governor, with the joy of a Father, giving up his child to the bridegroom!”



There was a lurking sneer floating, as it were, under a surface of solemnity, in the countenance of old Hugo, during this declaration, that filled Vernon with anxiety; and the last word 'bridegroom' was pronounced in so equivocal a tone, that the suspicious remark of Van Riesbeck, flashing to his mind with the force of a certainty, he inquired for Cootje.

"The young man loves the chase, more's the pity,"—replied the Father, with sanctimonious gravity,—“and sometimes he rides to the jungle,—again, if there be a merry-making, will not Cootje be there?—the lad knoweth that such vain-glories are an abomination to the eyes of his Father, and he leaveth no word of his departure.”

The keen glance of Vernon fell full on the Dutchman as he replied:—“The rains may answer for the huntings, and here is a witness that proves your son is not far from home!” Vernon held up the sambok which young



Drakenstein had forgotten in his hurry:—  
“ Yes, beyond a doubt, he is near at hand,—  
perhaps in the house:—produce him on your  
peril !”

The pale face of Drakenstein darkened for a moment, but immediately, with an expression of careless assurance, he replied,—“ Is there naught but hunting or dancing, in which the folly of youth may find a pastime?—are not the sparkling eyes, and soft voice of a fair woman, often stumbling blocks of temptation even to those who have listened to the Word ? if so, is it a marvel that the youth should forget a whip ?”

This was quite enough for poor Vernon ; the wild amorous disposition of the young Boar, as described by Van Riesbeck, filled him with fresh alarm for the safety of Bertha, and in hurried accents he exclaimed,—“ Jones ! —Sergeant Jones !—will the horses bear another march to-night ?”

“ No, Sir,—this ‘ Gentleman,’ ”—with rather

a significant emphasis on the word, and pointing to the easy chair, in which the gallant Pearlham was now completely "steeped in blissful forgetfulness,"—"this '*Gentleman*,' being mortally afraid of rain, the poor beasts were almost blown in a race to get out on't, and will not be in order to lift a hoof before morning."

"In that case, we must submit to a most vexatious unseasonable delay. In the mean time, Sergeant, see that the men commit no excess, and that all's ready for the march by day-light.

"Place a sentinel within and without—and I had almost forgotten—there must be a horse in readiness for Mynheer, as he will ride with us at day-break."

CHAPTER IV.

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“ A region of emptiness, howling and drear,  
Which man hath abandoned from famine and fear,  
Which the Snake and the Lizard inhabit alone,  
And the Bat, flitting forth from his old hollow stone.”

PRINGLE.

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As may have been anticipated, the troop of dragoons, detached for the recovery of Miss Falkland, had borne no part in the chastisement of the retreating Kaffers; and as the object was to surprise Drakenstein, a matter only to be obtained by a degree of promptitude and hard riding, incompatible with the age of the Major, he was reluctantly compelled to leave the execution of the design to the care of Vernon, whom Lieutenant

Pearlham was ordered to support with the military power under his command.

In the mean time Major Falkland continued with the main body of the troops, then steadily advancing in a north-easterly direction, with the view of driving the Kafers beyond the Great Fish River. During the march, parties were continually sent out in advance to annoy the Natives in their retreat, not only as a punishment for the past, but as an intimidation for the future. The sufferings of the Amakossæ, on this occasion, have already been alluded to, they were most severe; and although the excesses committed by the followers of S'Lhambi had to some extent justified their infliction; yet, as it unfortunately too often happens, the innocent were equally involved in ruin with the guilty.

Some of the best hunting grounds of the natives were at that period on this side of the Great Fish River; and as they had several 'Umzis,' or villages, in that district, the

fugitives naturally sought them as places of refuge. The separation of these men from the inhabitants was perhaps impossible, at all events, the attempt was not made; the 'Um-zis' were burnt in succession, and their wretched owners driven forward like beasts of the forest. It was said that among the affrighted, half-naked savages, thus flying for their lives, it was at a short distance difficult to distinguish the women from the men, and that a large number of the former were in consequence unavoidably shot. Be this as it might, the loss of life was awful; and it is to be feared that the Dutch boors, who in considerable numbers acted with the troops, were but too much inclined to indulge their feelings of retaliation to excess.

The consternation of the poor Savages was boundless, and being in their own wars most honourably scrupulous not to injure the females and children of an enemy, the loss of their own by this cold-blooded butchery, rendered them

frantic with detestation and horror! The feudes then existing among the different hordes, by preventing any efficient combination, rendered resistance impossible. Nothing could even be hoped in the way of protection from their own King Gaika, for he had already betrayed them, so far as to be in league with the Europeans! Other inferior Chieftains wanted power and talent for so great an emergency, and the despairing fugitives had no hope of succour, but from the interference of Makanna.

Here again was a difficulty, for several of these hordes had not hitherto acknowledged the power assumed by Makanna, who, notwithstanding his high pretensions, and fearful reputation, was not of the royal blood of Togush, and consequently a usurper. Punctilios of regal legitimacy stand but in little stead, in moments of national distress; and full of faith and proffered obedience, the appeal was made through the medium of the messenger, whose exhausted appearance and kind

reception by the Chieftain have been already related.

In taking measures for the relief of his suffering countrymen, the first object of Makanna, as we have seen, was to avoid being himself ostensibly implicated; and the accident which placed Laroon in an attitude to act as his substitute, at once realized all his wishes. The oath which had been extracted from his new friend increased his feeling of security, and he proceeded at once to arrange the necessary measures.

Among other preparations for accelerating the daring plans of self-aggrandisement which the ambitious mind of Makanna had shadowed out for the future, was the establishment of a secret store of provisions, and warlike munitions, in the fearful caverns which penetrate the 'Zwart-bergen,' or black mountains, on the boundaries of the Karroo.\*

\* These caverns were unknown to the European settlers till the year 1780, when they were discovered by a hunter.



This magazine, at the present moment, was of infinite importance, as it not only gave him the opportunity of furnishing supplies of every kind to the band of outlaw adventurers, whom he was about to place under the command of Laroon, but afforded shelter, concealment, and relief to a multitude of wounded, famishing Amakossæ, whom he had caused to be collected for that purpose. In the gratitude of these unfortunates, Makanna beheld the seeds of future power, and felt happy in the consciousness that the lives thus preserved would be the best safeguard in the day of danger for his own! But it was on the expedition to be undertaken by Laroon, that his hopes were principally centred.

The banditti-like gang, devoted to this service, were almost to a man self-exiled by their crimes, from the boundaries of peaceful society; and of the few not so debased, little better could be said than that they were so addicted to a vagrant life, as to be incapable of



any other. The ban of infamy was, more or less, upon them all; and, like the first-born of Sin, every hand was against them! This they knew, and those not brave by nature, became so from desperation.

The common ideas of discipline with such men were, of course, out of question; but though wild as Hyænas, yet they would hunt in a pack;—the lust of plunder would take them into action, and the hope of reward render them obedient to a leader. The most vicious in every community are always the most ignorant; and what then but Stygian darkness might be found in run-away slaves, proscribed felons, and outlaws by profession? Their ignorance was indeed of mature growth, and as usual, its first fruit was superstition. All the marvellous prodigies ascribed to Makanna, by these desperadoes were most potently believed, and he had in consequence a despotic influence upon their minds.

Still, after all, these fellows were not to be

depended upon too far. The idea of fair open fighting by day-light was not to be thought of; and though each man was a hero in self-conceit, not one had any fancy for wooing glory, except in the dark, or when danger might be hoodwinked in the blind-man's-buff of an ambuscade.

All these particulars were carefully explained to Laroan; and in speaking of the intended attack, Makanna strongly inculcated the necessity of conducting it solely on the principles of predatory warfare, and that the only advantages to be sought were delay in point of time, and the capture, if possible, of some officer of rank, for whose ransom the invaders might be glad to admit of terms. For this purpose, some devices of singular subtlety were mentioned by the Chieftain, but without shackling the discretion of Laroan, who was left in perfect freedom as to the command of the band, and in every other particular, except, that, at the moment of parting, Makanna took

occasion to remind him of the oath, and strangely added a hint, to the effect, that he already divined the foreshadow of a coming event, that at least would prove a temptation for its violation.

Some forty-eight hours had elapsed after the parting of Laroon from his mysterious ally, when the scout in advance of his little band, gave notice by a preconcerted signal, that the foe was in sight. Motioning the men to halt, the Creole passed on to the spot where the quick-eyed Malay had made his discovery. The brow of the hill commanded a view, perhaps one of the most romantic and extensive, that could be well imagined ; but, at that moment, Laroon was too deeply interested to notice aught, save the immediate object of his search.

The air was transparent to a degree, of which the climate of England affords no example, but which is familiar to those who served in the British army during the

Peninsula war. The most distant objects were strangely distinct, and the intense light gave a singular sharpness to the shadows.

The Malay kept his eye fixed on the dark side of one of the most remote hills, and on looking in the same direction, Laroon had a complete view of the invading troops, as they were descending its craggy side. The main body was indicated by a sort of dusky moving shadow, sometimes forming an oblong, or a series of badge-like spots, as the men changed their marching order from the nature of the ground. Some detached dashes, and an irregular cloud-like shade, indicated the camp equipage, and the presence of an immense drove of cattle taken from the Amakossæ.

Presently, a small object, probably a party of mounted Boors, became detached from the main body, and made rapidly towards a wood. Here, for awhile, they were lost to the eye, but soon a drifting mass of smoke

told but too plainly that they had succeeded in firing a village, and no great time elapsed, before herds of cattle and human fugitives might be discerned issuing from the other side of the wood, but apparently in vain, as the faint smoke from the fusilade of their pursuers was no sooner observed, than the whole disappeared in the darker shadow of the foliage. Such was the picture presented to the eye, but, with the assistance of a telescope, Laroon was enabled to take a more satisfactory 'reconnoissance,' in the true military sense of the term.

The next object was to ascertain where the enemy were likely to encamp for the night, and to take measures for an attack under cover of the darkness. The afternoon was considerably advanced, and as a green valley, indicating the presence of springs, lay at about five hours' journey to the left, where the horses and cattle might have a chance of grazing, it was natural to conclude that

it would be chosen for the 'bivouak.' To the neighbourhood of this valley, it was accordingly desirable to march without being observed by the enemy, and this, considering the clearness of the atmosphere, and the open nature of the country, was a matter of no common difficulty. To succeed, it was necessary that the attack should not be made later than midnight, or the retreat would not be secure, and such a plan would not admit of delay.

In this dilemma, the party were ordered to keep under cover of the hill, while scouts were sent out to reconnoitre the adjacent ground. Of these, all, except one, returned with the unsatisfactory report, that no sufficient cover for the advance could be found; this one stated, however, that he had discovered a ravine, opening to the channel of a dried up river, that might be made available.

This chasm was in the breast of a hill,

part of which had been undermined by the agency of subterranean streams, and opened with the abruptness and darkness of a grave. Its aspect was so forbidding, that the hunter had often turned from it with loathing and horror;—but the hope of vengeance, and the lust of plunder, made it welcome as the gates of paradise to the desperate band now huddled on the rocky shelf that formed its inner verge.

One or two daring fellows, by clinging, as they clambered, to the naked roots of the trees that overhung its gloomy jaws, managed to descend some way within, but were soon deterred, by the perpendicular and undermined sides of the vault that yawned beneath. The fragments of rock detached by their feet, sounded awfully, as they rolled into the black hollow below, and the ‘vampyre bats,’ disturbed by their fall, with shrill faint cries, kept flying round and beating their wide flapping wings against the sides. The place



indeed, seemed the very porch to the den of perdition, but the deep track of a water-course, stretching out from below through a long dusky belt of jungle, promised a secret path to the night camp of the enemy. Valour finds a zest in danger, and the order was given to descend.

Having fastened one end of a line to a piece of loose-stone and cast it within, while the other was secured to the tough roots of a sumach, Laroon set the example, and was followed with all due alacrity. The bottom proved a bed of damp sand, and after pursuing the track of the ravine in almost total darkness for about half a mile, the overhanging rocks and foliage presented a wider porch, and the whole party were soon after in the open channel of the exhausted stream.

Here, except the toil of marching knee-deep in hot sand, and breathing the close rank atmosphere of the surrounding jungle, steaming with moisture, and loaded with insects, there was little to complain of, and a

proportionable advance was made. After awhile, the sand becoming damper and firmer, evinced the neighbourhood of aquatic birds and reptiles, as it was imprinted with the foot-marks of Lizards, and frequently striped over with the slimy trails of serpents, till no form of life was visible, and tired into a sullen apathy, the ruffian band moved in silence forward.

The hollow track of the torrent, now grown deeper and wider, was carpeted over with the dark green leaves of aquatic plants, and presently, one of the large stagnant pools, or 'Vleys,' so constantly occurring in channels of the dried up rivers of Southern Africa, lay in dead-like tranquillity before them, bright and motionless as an immense shield of blue and polished steel. Surrounded on all sides with a dense border of gigantic rushes, and, in part, shadowed by drooping willows, this lake seemed a fearful obstacle, but a nearer approach dis-

covered a bed of drift-wood, forming a sort of platform on one side, which gave the chance of a passage.

Here, in prostrate ruin, decayed, moss-grown, branchless, and rifted, lay piled together the ancient trunks of some hundred forest trees, in a chaos of disorder. The upper layer, beautifully covered with strange varieties of creepers, -and flowery plants, interspersed with patches of moss, fresh and glowing in velvet greenness, and starred over with thousands of small bright yellow blossoms. Here, the footing was safe and firm, but in other places, where the water rose to a level with the surface of the immersed timber, the path was difficult and dangerous, as the trunks, wet and slimy, rolled beneath the tread, in a morass of black mud, interspersed with water, and impervious islands of tall rushes.

Laroon, still in advance of his band, was steadying himself with his 'umkoneto,' in

passing over one of these perplexing floating bridges, when, with a sudden heave, the water broke into large waves, as a dusky mass, like the hull of an overturned boat, and came slowly up, in a shower of bursting bubbles. In a moment, the small sharp tufted ears, and broad misshapen head, of a huge Hippopotamus arose immediately in front. Throwing his ponderous body backward, like a crouching elephant, and extending his tremendous mouth some three feet in diameter, and so hideously appalling from its vast teeth, and glistening redness, the creature menaced the Creole with instant destruction. Escape was, indeed, impossible, and, as the Hippopotami have frequently been known to tear even the rivetted planks from the ribs of a vessel, in mere wanton ferocity, any idea of resistance would have been absurd.

In this juncture of his fate, it was well for Laroon that his nerves were firm, and

still better, that he remembered the expedient of Makanna, and kept his glance with a bold daring fixed intently on the small fiery eye of the monster.

Once the Hippopotamus seemed about to demolish his victim, as with tremendous force he lunged forward, while a hoarse growl gurgled from his throat—and then, as if seized with a panic, the dreadful beast swung himself round, and, reaching shoal water, trotted rapidly off. Still, as the creature passed onward, by continually dipping his broad snout beneath the surface of the water, and jerking it up, he contrived to cast it in heavy showers over his back, and, at the same time, glanced anxiously behind, as if his object was to escape unseen in a storm of his own creation.

We have seen enough of Laroon to give him credit for courage of either sample, the moral or the physical, nor was the present a bad example of both; yet, had he been

asked the question, he must have owned that the feeling of dread was so complete, that no idea of resistance, had it been possible, ever entered his brain.

The boldest of his followers sympathised in this feeling most entirely, yet no sooner had the tremendous stranger condescended to show them his stern, than they awoke the echoes with one of their most discordant yells of defiance; and, had not the promptitude of Laroon withheld their folly, a platoon of balls would have rattled upon his hide, thick as hail, and with about as much effect. The report of fire arms might then have been fatal to their expedition, and when thus admonished, the thoughtless braggarts slunk silently into the rear.

Another half hour relieved the party from the unpleasant neighbourhood of the 'Vley,' and, as if to repay them for past toil, a bed of firm level sand, delightfully shaded by trailing branches of the weeping-willow, now

formed before them a cool and pleasant road. The deep yellow tinge of the sunbeams promised that the close of evening was at hand, while the screamings of a species of Ibis, and the low croonings of the Wood Pigeons, in wild response, not unpleasantly relieved the ear from the dull monotonous silence of the hotter hours.

“The night will soon be here,”—said Laroon, in a musing melancholy mood,—“and how many of these poor thoughtless desperadoes, whom accident might have coined into heroes,—yes, for to a man they’ve a natural genius for strife, and are pleasantly exempt from the compunctious visitings of conscience,—ay, poor devils ! how many, before the dawn, ‘will sleep the sleep that knows no waking !’”

Another thought trickled like ice-water through the bosom of the Creole, one, perchance, not very common to military men, and yet it must be owned, natural enough



in its way:—"Has he no responsible share in the game of death, who sets up the pins for Fate to shy at."

It was whimsical enough; for of all men, none had less cause to be sentimental on such a theme;—and after all, it was but another version of the close question of the royal Hunchback to his 'Ladie love,' the melting widow Ann; so cunningly wooed, and so easily won.

"Was not the causer of these untimely deaths, &c.

—— As guilty as the executioner?"

Now, as our friend Laroon had, poor fellow, no fair casuist, in the shape of maid, widow, or wife, to sing his heart to lullaby on the point, or to hide its nakedness in the silky folds of love—for women are strangely indulgent to the inactors, and blind to the stern realities of war!—he was compelled to seek a solace in active occupation. Of this there was 'quantum suf.' for a scout returning at the moment, brought

intelligence that the English troops were laying out their encampment—and it was, therefore, time to look to the refreshment of his own men previous to the exertions which a few short hours would demand.

## CHAPTER V.

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“ A goodly fellow by his looks, though worn  
As most good fellows are by pain or pleasure,  
Which tear life out of us before our time :  
I scarce know which most quickly.”

WERNER.

“ And now had the marriage been blessed by the priest,  
The revelry now was begun :  
The tables they groaned with the weight of the feast,  
Nor yet had the laughter and merriment ceas’d,  
When the bell of the castle toll’d—one !”

LEWIS.

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THE bivouac of the invading force was formed in the green valley, as anticipated by Laroon—and a site more suitable could hardly have been chosen. Guarded on one side by a broad swift stream, beautifully broken by a succession of

cascades, foaming and sparkling beneath a wild deep bank overgrown with jungle, and on the other by a wall-like precipice of stratified rock, a narrow strip of green turf, in velvet smoothness, stretched out with a semi-circular sweep to the extent of nearly a mile.

The only entrance to this little 'harbour of the Desert' was through a steep and narrow mountain-gorge, which half-a-dozen men might have defended against the world, but which the English, with their usual prodigality of means, had garrisoned with no less than a complete Company.

Thus, having made 'assurance doubly sure,' the main body were indulged by their officers with an evening's carousal in honour of the termination of the campaign—orders having been issued for the commencement of their homeward march in the morning. For this feast there was no lack either of appetite or of viands. In addition to some score of antelopes, and other game, shot on the yester-

day's route, the cattle of the poor Amakossæ furnished them with beef that would not have disgraced a Christmas-eve at Leadenhall. With these substantials, the men had been allowed more than ample potations of rum and toddy punch, while prime tobacco had been served out 'ad libitum.'

With all these appliances for fun and jollity, the 'main-chance,' in the military sense of the phrase, had not been forgotten. Intoxication was forbidden; and, to do the fellows justice, there was not one, when all was over, that could not, if he staggered rather too much to dress the line handsomely, bring 'Brown Bess' in a moment to the poise, either for the charge or the platoon.

The Boors had poured out their libations to the 'jollie god' with less reserve; and having driven their horned spoil to the far end of the valley whence there was no egress, and barricaded them there with a file of waggons, were pursuing their noisy orgies in social circles

on the grass; standing or walking, having been long interdicted by a total inability for either.

Of the Europeans, the greater part of the rank and file were sleeping uncovered within the cheering influence of a huge bank of flaring embers. The officers had most of them separate tents, just large enough to shelter their camp-beds, except in some few instances, when a larger show of canvass appeared, one of these being the little tasty Asiatic marquee of Major Falkland, which had been pitched on a gentle slope just on the water-edge near the end of the valley, next to the guarded pass that formed its only entrance.

Except the distant bursts of song and laughter, that seemed to roll along the night-air with a sensible vibration from the rocks, as the noisy Dutchmen were, ever and anon, more uproarious and glorious than before, all was silent as the enchanted palace of the

‘Sleeping Beauty.’ Fatigue and feasting will seal up a soldier’s eyes in ‘sweet forgetfulness’ sooner than all ‘the poppies and madragora’ in the world—and the English troops had received quite a sufficient dose of both. There was no sitting up to read by stealth the dear tear-blotted scrawl of a sweetheart, with little coy waxen kisses, round about the seal,—or, to cabbage tobacco or a dram from the canteen of a comrade. No, not even the loaded muskets, piled by threes and threes in readiness at their heads, had less sensibility to the common ills that flesh is heir to.

But the sentinels!—Ah! poor dogs, their duty, like the phantom voice in the ear of Macbeth, to them cries, “sleep no more!”—and at the peril of death, they must obey the mandate. Custom and regularity in matters, ‘a la militaire,’ are most imperative; so in the present case, though to right and left, dame Nature had kindly supplied her best



fortifications of rock and water, yet nevertheless, a contiguous chain of gray-coated sentinels had to pace in silent vigilance the livelong night, like so many solitary ghosts on the shores of the Stygian lake.

Another ‘minion of the moon,’—or rather of the stars, for Her Lunar Majesty had stollen off to the couch of Endymion, was the bluff old Serjeant Major, whose duty it was to see the guard relieved, and who suffered not a little from the indiscreet infirmity of babbling to himself.

“Ad-zwuns, what’s a sodger noo!”—muttered the old boy, in a tone quite ‘doloroso,’—“not a lassie cares ony mair for a red-coat noo, than ’twere a junk o’ scraped carrot! That comes o’ fallowing freesh reguleetions, an new fangled feuleries:—th’ cutting aff o’ tails, an’ th’ unnatural villany o’ giving ‘heavy bess’ a brown smug o’ her bright side.—Officers!—put awa—ha, ha, ha, aha, th’ beest wa’ but a bairn, saving th’ Major, wha

like mysel ha' a scrat o' th' gray cat :—bairns a', an wearing bibs when I war tied to my third wife, 'frisky Nance,' Laird rest her saul, as shaply a beet o' Eve's flesh wa' she, as e're stood in shone. Ad's rot th' half boiled lobsters, that they should ha' th' face to gie men ould enew to be their faithers' orders to cut aff their tails !—th' sons of a gun !—why when I wa' fogleman to th' light company, not a mon in th' land e'er thaught o' showing a tail, but yer parson, lawyer, or sodger—that wa' a destinction, that gave a mon a prime chance wid a dacent widow !”

“Sergeant !—Sergeant Major !” —said some one cautiously, from within, a low smok-stained tent at the Scotchman's elbow, appropriated as he remembered, to the sole use of Van Riesbeck, who, according to his own wish, had the supreme command of the sut-tling department.

“Sergeant,”—repeated the portly Dutchman, as drowsy and gaping, he thrust his

jolter head through a slit in the black canvass, in such a way as would have made a capital sign for the 'bull and mouth.' "I'm glad ye're handy, Sergeant, for not a wink o' sleep can I get for the fear of what may chance this blessed night!"

"Chaunce!"—said the old soldier, grounding his musket,—“why, ar'nt we as safe here as in th' ould town o' Gibraltar!—we've a bonnie rock behind, an' a surging water afore, mon: chaunce! why 'faith ye're faint-hearted as a male stay maker, Maister Riesbeck; ay, an tho' ye've th' gaunty nack o' sarving up as braw a mess as e're left a king's kitchen, yet th' deil a stomach ha' ye for th' wark o' ye're ain hands, mair than a wetted cat for mousing. Zoons, ye'll die a starvation in the land o'. plenty frae very fear!—Faugh, mon, shak' aff th' feul's ague—shak' him aff!"

"All men have not the gift to be valiant,"—replied Van Riesbeck with a shrug—"and I'll not be backward to confess, but that the

bare sight of 'these carnal weapons'—as old Hugo calls them,—guns and bayonets, have kept me sick at heart, and cold in the stomach, this many a day. Well, this night's worse than all!—you came not in from guard, Sergeant, till after supper, or you'd know there's not a man in the regiment, but's as heavy with prog and drink, as a blow ox;—as for fighting, if the Kaffers were to come down, 'faith, they'd skewer them up in their sleep easy as I'd truss a fowl!"

"Truss th' Deil on his ain red-hot flesh-fork, an' sarve him up wi'd brimstone sauce! never spak to me o' fear mon:—an' then ha' ye na mair charity than to talk o' feasting to th' hungry?—Come Maister Riesbeck, canna ye find ony thing that might line out a mon's inwards ginst th' cauld o' th' dawn—jist a wee stew, or"—

"Don't say a second word,"—cried the Dutchman, re-invigorated by a call to his favourite occupation,—“not a word, there's a

*bonne bouche* laid by for the Major, but 'faith, we'll have it—and I don't know, after all, but what I may just suck a little bit myself, while you're by, Sergeant, and all's safe."

So saying, Van Riesbeck strode off to a tumbrel used as a settler's cart, and soon returned with something long and heavy on his arms, wrapt up carefully in a delicately white napkin.

"Faith, Maister Riesbeck, a mon might think ye a cannibal altogether, and that ye'd a dead bairn in ye'r arms! Is't a monkey, mon, or a sucking-pig?"

"Come, come, guess again!—If you'd talked of 'petty toes,' you'd have been nearer the mark!—just poke a hole at the side of the fire where the embers are almost spent, and we shall have it done to a jelly in half an hour,—luscious as marrow, rich as turtle, glistening delicate, and white as blanc-mange."

"Aha, ye dinna say sae! what is't, mon?"—said the Sergeant, smacking his lips, and drawing aside the napkin with the eagerness

of a connoisseur, catching a first peep at a curtained picture of Titian's—"What the De'il—th' trotter of an Elephant!—jist th' Hunter's boast—'faith, and if ye feed on th' King o' th' forest, surely you'll grow intill a bauld mon, yet, Maister Riesbeck. Ay, poke it down th' hole cannily, an' cover up th' frizzle, I'll venture on a taste; new things are gude things, in a strange land."

Those who have once tasted it, need not be told, that the 'carbonadjed' foot of an Elephant deserves more than the encomiums of Van Riesbeck. On the present occasion, the mysteries of its cookery were most successfully attended to, and, in due season, the heap of wood ashes that covered it, having been raked carefully aside with a ramrod, the delicious prize still frizzling and spluttering with inward heat, was fished out, and, on the black crust being opened, displayed all its boasted bráwn-like delicacy, and melting richness.

As if in revenge, for having been absent

from the carousal of his comrade, the old Sergeant Major, pinning down the foot with a bayonet, slashed away, knife in hand, with the avidity of a famished Mohawk, while the luscious morsels, passing from hand to mouth, vanished with a legerdemain that defied imitation, and the steaming treasure itself grew every moment strangely less.

The example and dish were provocations that might have seduced the austerity of an anchorite; what wonder, then, that all the slumbering inclinations of so sincere a gourmand as Van Riesbeck were awakened. With the 'gout' of an old sinner in fresh practice, the long mortified Dutchman made ample amends for past abstinence, and soon, it was hard to say which frame of masticators was doing their master the better service.

Words, in these thrilling moments of delight, had been a bootless impertinence! still man is a social animal, and thus our epicures found a vent for the overflow of



feeling in reciprocal glances, that told unutterable things.

The experienced Van Riesbeck was the first to arrive at the l  the of reflection. A lump of transparent jelly-like fat was trembling on the point of his fork, at that moment suspended in its ascent, by a countermand from ‘sated appetite,’ though still his glistening eye seemed to devour with desire what the palate, from necessity, declined, when with hardly recovered breath, he whispered through unctuous lips, in a voice no less bland and oily,—“Sergeant Major, did ye not speak of a ‘widow ;’ odd’s life ! I dote on a widow,—but then all depends upon the sort !”

“Hut—hut awa’, mon ! wha’ll be sae bauld as to spak agin’ a ‘deacent widow ?’—an’ as for th’ sort, what a vaneety is there—for wha wad speir after ony, but them wha ha th’ siller !”—

“Pooh ! Sergeant, I see you’ve had right little experience o’ women-kind, or you would

have known, that the two sorts of widows make all the difference, of prizes and blanks ! Now your 'blank' is the widow of one man, that will be shier than a maid ; harder to catch than a bird once nabbed, and who has left half his tail in th' trap. If rich, she'll hold fast on her pelf ; and if not, what she's lost you'll never find ! No, no ! your 'prize' is the widow of two,—she that saved with the one, and so caught the other ; and, having buried the second, has worn the file off her tongue with the plaguing of both !—Ay, ay, give me the widow that has feathered her nest, and grown too fat and cozy to sing, to flutter, or twitter ! yes, that's a bird worth the caging ; but still, mind ye, the wires must be close :—and never hang her too much on th' sunny side of your heart, or 'faith, she'll catch the peacock's trick, an' think of nothing but her train."

The braw' Scot's second "Hut awa' mon," came with a vehemence that seemed to imply,

that our boon comrades were likely to have rather an angry tug for the separate limbs of the 'merry-thought,' when an 'All's well,' of unusual loudness left them both gaping in mute astonishment.

"Ah! the De'il!—that's Sawney Gordon's ain voice—a ramping rousing cheild—bauld as a lion!—faith, a hint frae th' like o' him should be weel studied."

So saying, the old Sergeant crouching down, and spreading his bony hands on either side his face, to screen off the red glow of the fire, continued gazing into the darkness beyond, with the abstraction of the witch of Endor when conjuring up the shade of Samuel.

As for Van Riesbeck, no faithless Nun, in the chamber of the Grand Inquisitor, and threatened with 'the question,' ever trembled more. Poor soul! not only did each individual hair stand on end, 'like quills upon the fretful Porcupine;' but the fat rotundity of his whole sleek person shook like a bog in

an earthquake; and his teeth chattered with the hollow rattle of the dry bones on an old gibbet when shaken by a storm.

“For the love of Heaven, Sergeant, speak!—Is the danger near?—Have we a chance?”

“Hau’d ye’re gab, mon, I’ll teel ye by an’ by,—I can’t speir ony thing certain, only some’at, like some’at!”—

“Like what?—Oh save us!—Like what?” and the Dutchman’s fit was fast returning, when the Sergeant recalled his fleeting faculties by saying—

“Leuk ye’rsel, mon, just out wa’ th’ gloam’s on th’ river, there’s strange lang creatures floating an’ swimming; still as water rats, an’ grey as badgers! Sin ye know th’ countree beest, guess yoursel, mon.”

Van Riesbeck did not wait a second word, but dropping on his haunches, thrust forward his head like a squatting toad, to bring his eye to a level with the water; and, after a momentary hesitation, bouncing up with the

quickness of a harlequin, he danced and laughed with the gesticulations of a mad-man!

“Deil tak th’ feul!”—cried the sergeant, who could not get a word from the overjoyed Dutchman,—“Faith, but I’ll prick ye’re fat paunch wi’ th’ bagonet, an’ if ye wul nae spake!—What gars ye laugh at th’ ugly varmint in th’ flude?”

The bare sight of the glittering steel was sufficient to restrain Van Riesbeck from the joyous spell of his enchantment, and with the precision of a penitent school-boy, he proceeded to inform the Sergeant, that the objects of their late alarm were no other than a group of those edible lizards, the Guano, whose flesh, when properly prepared, is deemed a delicacy of surpassing excellence.

“Why ye dinna teel a body sae”—said the Sergeant laughing heartily—“Faith they’re welcome, for ye’ve jist sic a jaunty knack o’ cooking strange fleesh, Maister Riesbeck, that

a mon wad nae desire a beet o' beeter luck!—Stand ye still—saftly, saftly,—we'll jist be quiet as 'kirk-mice,' an leet th' dumb creatures land cannily, an' then we'll stale down upon um unaware, an' run a knife glib across their yallow throats an' stap their sprawling."

"Yes, and when dished as they ought to be—ay, and as they shall be too—I'll be judged by an alderman if they don't beat turtle hollow; talk of your calliopee, and caliopash, tut, give me a luscious young Guano, roasted whole with a pudding in his paunch, basted with new milk, flavored with nutmeg, and, after all, eaten with a relish of pickled shaddocks, just to take down the oily ooze of the meat, and you shall own it worth a dollar a spoonful."

"Faith then, we're like till mak a swinging prize, for I speir some o' th' creatures as lang as a mon!"

"Yes, but the Duyvil a waste will you

find in their long scaly carcasses, what with floating bladders and other garbage."

"Dinna say anither word, but lie ye steady till they come ashore; you'll cook um brawly na doubt, an' then I'll teel ye what I'll do for ye, mon!—I'll teach ye hoo till catch a 'dacent widow' for ye'r pains!—Hush! saftly, zoons! I speir ane crawling yander amang the sedge, cloose by the Major's tint—ay, by St. Andrew, and anither too!"

Of course the only question now was how to demonstrate in the way quickest and surest, a due sense of gratitude to the 'Illustrious Strangers,' who had so obligingly come on shore to be eaten. With all military tact and discretion the Sergeant, therefore, having first waved his hand to Sawney Gordon, as a signal of non-interference, assigned a lateral movement to Van Riesbeck, which, if skilfully executed, promised to cut off the retreat of the Guanoes from the river. The knives for 'rining glib across the throats'



of the unfortunate reptiles were not forgotten; and, on the advice of Van Riesbeck, the Sergeant having thrown down 'the ugly iron lumber,' as the Dutchman called his musket, grasped a trusty rattan, as the fittest weapon for the assault.

As there were others in the water, the great object was to capture the two on shore, with as little disturbance as possible; and, accordingly, the Guano hunters made their advance in a crouching attitude, and with as much circumspection as two boys about to rob an orchard.

With knives unsheathed, sticks elevated, and all that zest for blood and slaughter which a taint, doubtless, of original sin, has made instinctive in the human animal, our heroes had arrived at the sedgy gully, up which, but two minutes before, they had seen the Guanoes crawling, when, lo! it was empty. That the two Lizards should have repassed to the water was impossible; that they had

not wandered on either side was equally certain, for the grass was not long enough to hide them: and, lost in astonishment, the hunters gazed on each other like men bereft of their senses.

“Laird, guide us!” cried the Sergeant, with the most dolorous intonation, “We’re weired bairns till a certainty.—Here’s a clan deception o’ th’ sanses, that laves a man a mockery till himsel.”

“Worse than that,” replied Van Riesbeck, “I doubt the Duyvil has loosed that Amakossæ demon, Makanna, who can take any shape may suit his purpose.”

“Hut awa!”—interrupted the Scotchman, quite himself again—“Haud yer gab; why, Maister Riesbeck, yer enow to chang a bauld mon intil as big a coward as yoursel! I’ll teel ye what, th’ cratures ha spared us th’ trouble o’ catching um, by crawling under th’ canvass intil the markee. Ah, th’ Deil! what a cauld bedfeellow wul th’ Major find

by his side shu'd ane o' th' slimy varmint straggle intil him!"

The Dutchman was giving his joyful assent to this new version of the marvel, when the markee, which had been carefully pegged down for the night, became strangely and violently agitated. Now bulging out on this side, and then on that, almost to bursting,—while shaking and flapping, as a sail broke from the brails, it seemed more like a receptacle of struggling demons, or wild horses, than a place of human habitation. Presently the centre pole was suddenly unshipped, and the canvass fell in, but still it continued heaving and tumbling like the waves of the ocean. In a moment after, one side being torn up, Major Falkland in his shirt, as aroused from sleep, came forward struggling with two strange monster-forms, that might, in their disguise, have been mistaken for Alligators, had it not been for their human jestures, as partly dragging, and partly carrying the old officer,

whose counter-efforts were tremendous, they hurried into the water.

There was a time when the Sergeant might have defeated their purpose, for in such a cause, the veteran Scot would have risked a tustle with the fiend as soon as his imps, which he really believed these appearances to be, but that Van Riesbeck, in an agony of fear, hung upon him with the weight and gripe of a Polar Bear, and all he could accomplish, was to shout the alarm to his comrades.

On the instant, the 'crack' of Sawney Gordon's musket re-echoed from the rocks, and as if by magic, the troops were at once under arms, with that prompt steady discipline, which seems an instinct in the British soldier.

The night was so dusky, that nothing was visible at a short space from the fires, but in a few minutes, the 'rappel' was heard from the 'piquet' at the mountain pass, and then the flashing of fire-arms, appearing as it were in mid air from the darkness, and

elevation of the post, told, that the main-guard were also attacked. This was very properly deemed a feint, and the attention of the troops directed solely to the rescue of the Major. Any immediate effort of this sort, was, unfortunately, out of the question, for the total obscurity on the water rendered it impossible to discover in what direction he was borne. The old officer was, however, beloved as a father by the men, and in a trice the Grenadier Company were wading breast high in the river.

Not a sound was to be heard but a distant splashing, and the quick tramp of parties marching down upon the shore, when the deep-toned voice of the Major, remote, but still clear and cheerful as ever, broke on the ear, exclaiming,—“Fire! my boys,—level with the water,—Fire!”

A file of ready muskets were on the poise, the locks crackling like hail, when the Sergeant springing forward, exclaimed,

“Nae, nae, ye manna fire lee’vel wi’ th’

water, or you'll shoot th' ould Lion himsel!—  
Nae, nae, ye wul na kill him 'cause he's bauld  
enew to bid ye!—bide a wee beet,—gauntly.”

Again there was a sound from the distance  
on the water:—a sound of contending voices,  
a clang of weapons, and fierce cries!

“The Laird be merciful!”—said the old  
Sergeant, involuntary raising his clasped  
hands above his head, with the solemn action  
of a preacher,—“the Laird be merciful!—  
there's murder!—now lads, ready!—a flash  
in th' air may scare th' bloody brutes—leevel  
high,—fire, boys,—in the name o' God, fire!”

The report of the platoon fell on the ear  
in one blow, like the thunder of a great gun;  
and the broad flame, gleaming bright as  
lightning on the water, revealed a scene that  
redoubled their anxiety. On some rocks,  
forming a low cascade in the distance, the  
half-naked figure of Major Falkland appeared,  
surrounded by three persons, two of whom,  
‘white men,’ were evidently attempting his



life; but the third, a Kaffer, while dragging him upward, was at the same time beating them off with his battle-axe. In a moment, all again was buried in darkness; but as soon as the men had reloaded, a continual fusilade was ordered, that kept up a glimmering light.

Just at this time, Captain Daker, who, as a volunteer, had shared the toils of the expedition, from motives of curiosity, and to enjoy the society of his friend, the Major, came down to the shore. The rage of the old seaman, on hearing what had occurred, was boundless. Indeed, having taken more wine than usual on the previous evening, and so short a sleep not having sufficiently allayed the excitement, his indignation was becoming more noisy than useful, when a sudden shock restored him at once to sense and silence.

Having thrown some canvass on the smouldering fire, the Serjeant obtained a blaze that showed distinctly the nature of the



struggle on the rocks. It was now evident that the ruffians, kept at bay by the Amakossæ warrior, had resolved to put the Major to death, rather than run the chance of his recapture by the grenadiers, who, indeed, but for the accident of having got half drowned amid some eddies in the deeper parts of the stream, might have overtaken them. As it was, their pealing shouts but increased the danger, by betraying their eagerness to effect the rescue.

The situation of the party on the cascade became, too, every moment more urgent. The rocks, slippery with green slime, even where elevated above the rapid whirl of the torrent, afforded but a most insecure footing; and here, encumbered with the weight of the Major, who was still struggling to escape, the Amakossa stumbled. In a moment, one of the fellows whom he had hitherto kept in check, succeeded in wounding the prisoner. A second thrust would have ended all trouble

with the Major, and the 'murderous weapon was raised with energy for the purpose, when the gallant Amakossa, hurling his battle-axe at the villain's head, dispatched him at a blow.

A shout of "Bravo!" burst simultaneously from the grenadiers in the river, and the troops on shore, when, raising his hands in utter astonishment, Captain Daker exclaimed:—

"Good Heavens! that I should live to see what I can't believe,—Paul Laroon and a Kaffer Chief, the same!—"Twas the flourish of his arm,—the lightning of his glance,—and, more than all, his devil of a smile!—Yes, Kaffer or Fiend, 'tis he!—"tis Paul Laroon!—By Jove! I'll forgive the loss of the Good Ship, Ganges, so he'll save the Major.—

"Hurrah, my boys, cheer him like thunder!—"tis the 'salt sea shark,' Laroon, as those black-hearted mutineers once called him.—Hurrah, my boys! why the Major,

God bless his white head, is safe as a babe at the mother's breast. Ha, look ye there, see how he bears him over the crest of the rocks, through whirling tide and bursting foam, like a young giant at play. The murdering lubber that's left, follows at his heels, quank as a flogged hound.—Ay, now they're clear off.—Never mind, boys, the Major is in as bold hands as ever cracked biscuit.

“Tut, leave off your popping, you might as well trim a ship in courses, when a northeaster blows the sea into rags, as think of stopping Laroon.—Call in your grenadiers, Serjeant, they'll do little good there;—the dogs are right staunch, but were never bred for the water. — Yes, yes, pipe all-hands-to quarters:—serve out a swig of grog to keep the wind out of their stomachs, and off to hammock.—Yes, take my word for this,—the log's written up for the night.”

“'Faith!—but th' auld sea Captain ha' capsized his wit in th' punch-baull,”—said

the Sergeant, indulging in his favourite habit of self converse with impunity, for the hint given above was too good to be neglected, and the coast was now clear,—“’faith, did ony mon eever harken till sic a redeeculous vaneety, as till call a ‘heathen Kaffer’ by th’ name o’ a ‘christian’—ay, an’ till think him ane too, intill th’ bargain !”

## CHAPTER VI.

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“ Oh ! that the desert were my dwelling place,  
With one fair spirit for my minister,  
That I might all forget the human race,  
And, hating no one, love but only her :  
Ye elements !—in whose ennobling stir  
I feel myself exalted—can ye not  
Accord me such a being ?”—

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

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As it was necessary for Drakenstein, in the first instance, to inspire the confidence he meant to abuse, nothing could be more obliging than his conduct, in conducting Vernon to the ‘refuge,’ as he called it, of Miss Falkland, in the wilderness. On the road, indeed, the wary Dutchman pointed out so many

specious reasons for the step he had taken, in removing her to a safer shelter than his own house at 'Zee-koe-Gatten' was likely to prove, in a time of commotion ; and inferred so many dark suspicions, as to the intentions of Laroon, that Vernon, naturally of a kind and open nature, began to blame himself for having entertained a prejudice against ' so worthy a man,' merely, as he then thought, in consequence of some harmless peculiarities.

It was in one of these conferences, that Drakenstein, pulling up his horse, and slowly raising his eyes, with an expression of profound humility, exclaimed,

" Lo ! was not the damsel found on the way side, as a succourless lamb, when the flock are scattered by the wolf?—Even so ;—and to me hath she not been made a charge, a trial, and a thorn of reproach :—Yet, moreover, in due season, she shall become as a tower of hope ! yea, as ' a daughter,' in the

bonds of the spirit.”—His countenance then darkening with those masterless feelings, that often carried him into a moody rapture beyond his purpose, he added—“Are the bonds of the spirit less than those of the flesh?—if she is the one, shall she not prove the other? yea, the ‘rose’ shall bud forth on the Desert, and the ‘pearl of price’ be gathered from the refuse of the Ocean.”

Having been familiar with the metaphorical rhapsodies of Drakenstein, the present, like the past, would only have awakened feelings of amusement, from its quaintness, had not Vernon remembered, that the hints of Van Riesbeck, and the absence of Cootje, rendered the allusion to bonds of relationship, whether of flesh or of spirit, more probable than pleasant. Such fears were, however, most entirely and agreeably dissipated, on its being found that Cootje had not once visited the ‘Umzi’ during her residence there.

Several days after this occurrence, when



the whole party, apparently full of mutual confidence, were on the homeward route, Vernon, who, with Miss Falkland, was riding somewhat in advance, chanced to remember that they were passing the spot where Drakenstein had pulled up his horse, and made the allusion which had given him so much groundless anxiety.

They were traversing a rugged sort of down, sprinkled over with mammocks of rock and thorn-bushes; and Vernon was about to point out the picturesque beauty of one of the former, a crag of perished granite, honey-combed with caves, and festooned with flowery creepers, when his attention was arrested by the shadow of a man falling directly at the base of its opposite corner, in such a way as inferred an ambuscade!

Vernon laid his spurs sharply in the flank, and giving his horse head-way, the gallant animal sprung forward, but the shadow disappeared with equal quickness; and in the

instant (for it was no more) that he had turned the crag, the man who had lurked behind it was equally invisible.

There was no other shelter at hand, except a long range of huge bushes of the acacia detinens, commonly called the 'wagt en botje' (wait a bit), whose hook-like thorns, no man would encounter, except from sheer necessity. The skulking stranger was therefore an enemy, or he would not have sought concealment at so much inconvenience; and Vernon felt, with no very comfortable emotion, that his dark image upon the earth, even in its momentary visitation, had left enough upon his mind to assure him that it was the shadow of Cootje.

The instant was one of emergency, as it involved the future, but the presence of Miss Falkland kept him silent; and he also reflected, that while his doubts were without any better evidence than a past shadow, it would be absurd to give them utterance. Still the natural desire of probing the mystery to

the bottom made him unwilling to leave the spot without some effort at its solution ; having beckoned, therefore, with a careless air to two of the nearest dragoons they were immediately at his command.

“ Cast a shot, my good fellows, into that thorn-bush,”—said Vernon, with affected indifference,—“ something sculked into it just now, though perhaps nothing better than a Fox.”

Bertha covered her ears with her hands as the carbines were levelled, but not without a smile at so strange a fancy for sporting in the very demure Mr. Vernon.

Torn and broken branches marked the track of the balls into the centre of the bush, but nothing broke covert, and the men were ordered to repeat the experiment, when, before the former smoke had time to rise, Drakenstein, his horse covered with foam, his face pale to wanness, and his eyes glancing like fire, dashed in before them.

“Is he slain?”—cried the Dutchman, in a voice half stifled with terror:—“I hear no sound,—no, not a groan!—tell me, is he dead?”

“Hang the Fox, I wish his brush were stuck in your throat,”—said the astounded soldier, roughly shaking off the importunate querist.—“Stand clear, man, an’ we’ll knock the dust about his eyes again!”

“What!”—rejoined Drakenstein, at once changing his manner to a forced cheerfulness, —“Is’t but a brute beast!—I thought—but no matter.”

“Yes, matter enough, as for that,” said the dragoon;—“your Cornish hug’s too tight for a joke:—if time’s lost after this fashion, too, the beast will be off!—Stand clear!”

“Hold!”—cried Vernon, who just then remembered, that if young Cootje had been shot in the bush, his share in the transaction would have amounted to something very like murder, and whose kind feelings were shocked

at the emotion which Drakenstein had betrayed,—“Hold! ’tis but wasting powder:—besides, should it prove what I expect, ’twill afford better sport by half to trap him alive!”—His eye fell on Drakenstein, who shrunk away with a visible uneasiness, though he strove to conceal it by a smile.

“’Pon honour, Vernon,”—said Lieutenant Pearlham, who had just ridden up,—“I like that idea of your’s vastly:—By the by, a pair of trapt Zebras, young enough to be broken in for harness, would be delightful! By Jove, I’d drive them tandem in the Park, with four outriders, and the Papers would speak o’ nothing else for a month!—’Twould be the rage, and Pearlham the lion of the day!—Fore Jove, the women would run mad to possess ‘the pretty dear striped darlings:’—and then, you know, the horses of the Sun were useless without Apollo!—to divorce me from my Zebras would be monstrous!—and thus the choice of Pearlham, among the sweet pal-

spitating aspirants, would exceed the Great Mogul's, when the starry circle of bright eyes are on the 'qui-vie' for the kerchief that can fall but on the bosom of one.

“ ‘Allons,’ as I live, there's a drove of Zebras, at this moment grazing on the side of yonder hill :—Yes, by Jove, Fortune has put them into my very hand :—’Twill be better sport than a fox-chase by half.

“ Jones ! Sergeant Jones !—Pick out a dozen prim riders, and we'll be rattling after them in a whirlwind of speed. Don't say a word, Vernon—can't stay—Yoicks, forward ! we're off !”

And off, indeed, they were, in as fine a breathing gallop as ever crossed the course at Newmarket ! Pearlham had a passion for rough riding ; perchance it was the only thing he did well, and, however effeminate on other occasions, the Lieutenant was not only a man, but a bold one, on horseback. Perchance, too, the vanity of displaying his equestrian accom-



plishments before Miss Falkland gave a secondary spur to inclination; on the present occasion, at least, his eagerness was far too potent to allow him to hear a word of Vernon's remonstrance, which certainly appeared, at the moment, a little unreasonable.

Still this crippling of the escort, for only a few of the dragoons were left, and most of those in the rear, with the baggage, and indifferently mounted, was, under present circumstances, a serious cause of perplexity.

That Cootje was lurking on their way, with no very laudable intentions, was evident, yet Vernon was inclined to think that nothing very serious was to be apprehended; for, if the young Boor was supported by sufficient numbers to venture on an attack, the consternation of old Drakenstein was incomprehensible. Thus, after turning the matter over in his mind under every light, Vernon felt inclined to suppose that the affair would prove nothing more than a frolic—though the fore-



knowledge, which the fear of Hugo betrayed, seemed to hint at something more.

To preserve Miss Falkland from unnecessary alarm, and, at the same time, to guard against any signal, or co-operation on the part of the father, were the chief points to be attended to, and Vernon thought they would be easily effected. In the first place, whispering some orders unperceived to two of the men, he requested Drakenstein to ride with them in the front, in a way which the latter understood too well to question. Four other horsemen followed at the distance of a few hundred yards, with Mage and Javan under their care, while the centre was occupied by himself and Miss Falkland.

During the whole of the previous march, the flippant gossip, and obtrusive gallantry of the volatile Pearlham, and the no less obtrusive sermonizing of the formal Dutchman, had so unceasingly occupied the attention of his lovely charge, that Vernon had not found a single

chance of whispering even one of the thousand soft insinuations, with which he had intended to have besieged her heart. But now it seemed as if "the wayward god of gay desires," in allowance for past mortifications, had pre-arranged all things for his purpose.

Under the protection, but without the interruption of society, he found himself by the side of the fair dispenser of his destiny; and strange to say, though his bosom throbbed high with emotion, yet not a word of greater import than a monosyllable found its way to his lips. Of all "natural magic," that of love is certainly the most incomprehensible: at least the greatest slaves to its power are the first to deplore its contradictions. And yet, after all, were it not for the tender anxieties which the changes of those very contradictions, with their day dreams of the future, and present uncertainty of pain or transport, as the lovely trifler may ordain, *la belle passion*, if not a dull affair, would at least be sweetest when shortest!

But there is "a magic in love," and who that ever gazed on Beauty can doubt its power? The very silence of Vernon was a proof of its reality. The fascination of the eye had paralysed the tongue, and the spell that entranced the feelings rendered them too sensitive to the delicious witchery of its own delirium to admit a consciousness of aught beside.

And she, the sweet Enchantress who had awaked these subtle sympathies in one of the calmest natures that ever passed the summer of youth unimpassioned by woman's heart-consuming glance:—why she rode on, as little conscious of the mischief lurking in her smile, as the flower of the coming storm that may rifle its beauties.

It was indeed a long while since Bertha had met with any thing half so amusing as Pearlham's wild freak of hunting zebras, and as the courtly Lieutenant and his warlike retinue, still visible in the distance, met ever and anon, with some of the numberless mis-

haps incidental to the headlong chace of such a quarry, the native buoyancy of her spirit showed itself not only in the "wreathed smiles" to which a frigid etiquette would limit a lady's mirth, but in jocund peals of laughter, not indeed requiring all the physical restraint recommended by Milton,\* but sufficient to give a whimsical bobbing impetus to the vibrations occasioned by the old high-pummeled Dutch side-saddle, which, by the by, was the only female accommodation of the sort which the '*ménage*' of Drakenstein could furnish.

Had we been describing "the heroine of a romance," nothing could have implied so sad a breach of the "proprieties," as to confess that Bertha could ever forget the graceful "*penserosa*" further than a smile. She might indeed have been painted "lovely in her tears," as the enshrouded moon, or a snowdrop gemmed with dew; but, for the every-day vulgarity of downright laughter, it had been

\* "And Laughter, holding both his sides."

an enormity past endurance! In the relation of a plain matter-of-fact historical detail, no such exercise of discretion can be allowed, and we must, at all hazard, go further and aver, that Miss Falkland never appeared more charming than at this moment.

The coy reluctant modesty which hangs so gracefully around the presence of an English maiden, and, like the softening haze of her native landscape, gives a subdued and tender tone to every feature, if it harmonize the whole, may yet leave, here and there, a dimness. It is in dissipating these that the fine arts gain half their value in society: they awaken kindred ideas, and unvale the finer sensibilities of the soul. How often amid the social circle of her own dear home, had Bertha stood in timid meekness, passive as a statue of Silence, and perhaps too much absorbed, when the angel voice of music, some entrancing passage of poetry, or a reference to the magic of painting and sculpture, has at once en-

kindled the latent emotions that slumbered so deeply, till the overflow of soul gave her the animation and eloquence of a priestess of Minerva.

There was nothing half so solemn on the present occasion; but still the effect as it regarded Vernon was very much the same. The vail of reserve which she had ever so cautiously worn when in his presence, was thrown aside, as, in fact, from the exhilaration of the moment, both herself and her companion were equally forgotten.

Her eyes, no longer half concealed with the dark deep silken lashes that gave so much sensibility to their bashfulness, beamed on the distant prospect in the full effulgence of their liquid light, clear and glowing as those of a young gazelle. The free unguarded attitude no less, as turning half backwards she reclined on her seat to gain the better view, betrayed the rounded grace and beauty of her form, to an extent of which the fond



imagination of Vernon had not previously dreamt.

“The bloom of young desire, and purple light of love,”—

as Gray has so eloquently said,—again suffused her cheeks, her bright nectarian lips parting in smiles, were redolent with life,—ah, wherefore not with bliss! The slave of passion has his fond credulity, and self-deluding visions, no less than the blindest votary of a superstitious faith; and blessed with these seraphic visitants, he makes his heart a paradise, and so did Vernon. The idol of his enamoured hopes was now before him in a form of sparkling loveliness, beyond what even his heated fancy had conceived! The ethereal robe of chastity, if more transparent, became more holy in its brightness, and he beheld a deep susceptibility of joy, a sympathy of human tenderness, that, as he fancied, bade him not despair.

In such a moment there is a happiness in



silence, and the heart revels in the secret intoxication of its own delicious musings. Poor Vernon felt all this to the verge of extacy! His nerves thrilled wildly with new sensibilities; the swelling pulse kept time with the madness of the hour, and his glistening eyes were growing dim with the intensity of delight, when the toll of a bell, solemn and sweet, came mournfully upon his ear.

Again it sounded, and once again!—Vernon and Miss Falkland looked at each other in mute astonishment. The glance of Bertha was transient, the glow of vivacity had faded, but her look was evidently one of inquiring friendship mingled with maidenly reserve, rather than the impassioned appeal of a fond girl, who, in a moment of danger, throws herself on the protection of her lover, secretly exulting in any cause that may excuse a shelter in his arms!

Vernon comprehended but too well the meaning of such a look;—it showed that her

affections could never be his own;—the fever of excited hope was dissipated, an icy chill stole through his breast, and as the mystic bell, sounding in the air, came again upon the wind, it seemed the knell of his departed hopes.

Seasons of great mental excitement lead but to debility, and the overwrought faculties recoil upon themselves in weakness and confusion. Vernon suffered from this revulsion of the feelings severely; his heart swelled with a sense of suffocation, and shading his face with his hand, he remained as one that would conceal an emotion he cannot conquer.

The three separate and distinct tolls, mellow and sad, were again repeated; and what seemed equally strange, from a different direction! The whole party were brought to a halt, and the rough soldiers, who had slept soundly beside the dead on the field of battle, gazed on each other in pale inquietude.

Since the departure of Pearlham the advance had been but slow, yet still a considerable distance had been gained, and they had for some time been traversing the confines of a forest, without its having been observed by Vernon. His soul-absorbing day-dream of happiness was now no more; and when, on being aroused by the halt of the men, he looked around,—the scenery was but too much in unison with his own melancholy feelings.

Instead of that picturesque, and varied beauty of vegetation, which had so frequently delighted him in the wild woody kloofs of this singular country, the one at hand was a sapless mass of dead and mouldering timber. Far as the eye could reach, it wandered over the same dull sickly tint of dingy green, occasioned by the load of shaggy lichens with which time had enveloped every trunk, branch and twig.

When a forest is thus struck dead in the pride of its growth,—the event generally arises from the occurrence of some very un-

usual inundation, when the foliage preventing any efficient evaporation, the water lies till the roots of the trees are rotted beneath them; and, as they stand too close together to admit of any after-growth from the soil, no change, or show of life may occur for centuries. Such had been the case here; and the trees rotting quickly, or the reverse, in proportion to the spongy or solid nature of their wood, were in every stage of decay.

Here and there hundreds, having broken down together, lay in heaps with black cave-like openings between them, and covered with rank fungi, often of gigantic growth and grotesque forms. In other instances, the trees still stood more or less erect, not having even space to fall. These were completely covered with the fringe-like moss before alluded to. In some cases, where the wood was particularly hard, the bark having rotted off, or been torn away by birds, in pursuit of their insect food; the smooth dry

branches, in naked whiteness, stood gauntly out from the mouldering ruins around, as if the fragments of some enormous antediluvian skeleton.

The dread, perplexing, ringing in the air, sounded again, and nearer, when one of the dragoons had the good fortune to discover its cause, in the presence of that singular, and to them unknown bird, the Campanero.\* With its usual fondness for solitude, the creature was perched on the highest branch of a superb mora, that stood on the edge of the blasted forest, and, by some strange chance, had escaped its fate.

More than one musket was raised for the poor bird's destruction, when Bertha interceded in its favour, and the men continued their march, though sadly out of humour at

\* "The Campanero of the Spaniards, or Bell-bird of the English, has a note loud and clear, like the sound of a bell, and may be heard at the distance of three miles. You hear his toll, and then a pause for a minute, then another toll," &c.—*Waterton's Wanderings*.

having betrayed so much superstitious fear at such a cause.

Proceeding at the same slow rate, to give Pearlham a chance of rejoining before night, the party had entered a defile winding through a series of low hills, covered more or less with thorn-bush, while the hollows were choked up with guinea-grass, when Javan, having caught the attention of Vernon, pointed, with a momentary eagerness, at some dark entangled bushes of heath and mimosa.

It was evident, that the boy feared to speak in the presence of Drakenstein, whose glance had lately lowered upon him, from time to time, with a most sinister expression. Taking advantage of a turn in the track, that sheltered the lad from the view of his quondam master, Vernon inquired what he meant to imply; when, answering in a smothered voice, as if the very air might repeat his words, he whispered:

“Javan fear shoot dead!—Javan see bush



shake,—no wind!—that bad,—bad man make bush shake!”—and the boy, cowering down on one side, gave the pantomimic action of a person creeping through a covert: then, rising, and holding up the three main fingers of the left hand, and touching them in succession with the first of the right, he added,

“One,—two,—three,—bushes all shake!—One,—two,—three time,—all shake!”—repeating the quivering of the fingers, and the action of the other in touching them.

“By heaven!”—said Vernon to himself,—“the boy means that the three bushes have shaken thrice at once, from men creeping through them, one in each, so that there must at least, be nine dogging our track, and half the number so concealed might be fatal when the light begins to fail.

“Hark’ee, Javan!—you love your lady?”—the boy’s eyes flashed fire:—“Well, then, we must kill those bad men, and you must show us where they lie!—Here, take these



pistol-balls, and throw them into the next shaking bushes you observe."

"Bad men kill Javan!—but Javan love sweet lady!—Javan throw bullet:"—and the brave boy, with the spirit of a young lion, advanced to the front.

Though Drakenstein was riding unarmed between the two dragoons in the van, who had very *politely* informed him, that they would allow themselves the pleasure of shooting him through the head 'according to orders,' if he afforded the slightest cause for suspicion; yet it was evident, that a feeling of savage triumph was every moment gaining ascendancy in his mind. He even laughed at his own thoughts with that inward sort of chuckle, with which he was wont to relate the hunting exploits of his youth, and then counted the number of the escort, as if in derision of their weakness. It was at such a moment, when, as Javan rode forward, his countenance fell, a malicious gloom overcast

every feature, and his insolent gaiety was suddenly exchanged for a state of extreme anxiety.

Having very judiciously determined to anticipate the enemy's attack, before night-fall gave the advantage of darkness to their ambuscade ; and, expecting every moment Javan's signal for that purpose, Vernon felt that it was time to give Bertha some intimation of the coming and inevitable danger. This he did, in terms delicate and cautious, as love could dictate ; taking care to enlarge upon the full equipment, and daring courage of the escort, the great advantage they had in the possession of horses, and the probability that the sound of the firing would immediately bring back the thoughtless hunters (of the morning) to the support of their comrades.

In all this, Vernon had only hoped to assuage the poignant distress into which he naturally concluded, that such fearful intelligence would throw her. What then was

his astonishment, to find his remarks met not only with firmness, but almost with indifference. She thanked him indeed earnestly for his very friendly attention to her welfare, but added most strangely, that she had "some reasons for thinking, that nothing really unpleasant,—nothing at all events in the shape of a hostile attack would occur:"—she begged, "above all things," that if from "any idle trick of Cootje a scuffle should arise,"—that the dragoons might have "strict orders to bite the balls from their cartridges in loading, for fear that a life might be lost by *accident*, when nothing more than intimidation would be required;"—and finished her singular harangue, by entreating him to take care that "not a word of his extraordinary suspicions" might be breathed to Mage, who, she declared, would fall into hysterics at the first syllable, and thus render their advance impossible.

All this, in Vernon's estimation, who could hardly give credence to his ears, was a com-

plete tissue of presumption, apathy, and folly, totally unworthy of the high-minded, but deeply sensitive Miss Falkland. There was only one idea that seemed to give a clue to the mystery, and this was, that she who had shown such total indifference to his own fervent, but refined passion, from some strange perversity of nature, had actually fallen in love with the young Boor;—‘the royster Cootje!’

Filled with this fancy, which wore too much the shape of jealousy for the exercise of sound discretion, Vernon immediately resolved to run counter in every particular to the pacific instructions of the ‘ladye-love,’ of his rival. Thus in passing from man to man, he charged the dragoons not to fire without a “steady aim”—that would give them “the life for the lead,”—and looking to his own pistols, determined to encounter Cootje himself, even if he dismounted for the purpose.

It need not be said how far on this occa-

sion, Vernon misconstrued the motives of his gentle friend. The fact indeed was, that she herself was borne away with an equal delusion; and one too that could not be dissipated, as her delicacy would not suffer her to hint a word as to its existence.

It will be remembered, that the accident of the telescope had filled Bértha with an agony of grief at the supposed loss of her father. From this, the intelligence of his welfare, as brought by Vernon, had not only relieved her, but she had reason to hope, that a few days would restore her to his bosom; thus her natural vivacity had returned, although in one particular, the news furnished by Vernon was far from satisfactory, as he knew nothing more of Laroön, than his separation from himself and Cootje at the 'Dwyka' hunt.

During one of their more confidential conversations at 'Zee-koe-Gatten,' Laroön, in his own peculiar way, had repeated to herself the

promise given to her father, relative to her restoration; and when held in thralldom by Drakenstein, she had often thought that freedom would be doubly sweet, if obtained through the exertions of her lover. At last, indeed, when Vernon appeared with his 'order from the Governor' and military escort she was half out of humour, that he should lay her under so great an obligation at so little risk, when she had every reason to expect, that her cause would be undertaken by a 'knight-arrant' so daring and devoted as Laroon.

This flattering expectation still lingered on her mind, and when Vernon informed her that there were parties lurking on their march, she immediately concluded that the protection she most desired was hovering around her, though, from some unknown reason, in secrecy and silence. With this impression, instead of the uneasiness and alarm anticipated by Vernon, the renewed consciousness of her concealed passion, and the idea that she was even then in the view



of one so long absent and so dear, gave a deeper tinge to her cheek, and a richer luxuriance to her beauty.

As for Vernon, the desolation of his heart made him anticipate the approaching skirmish with a strange eagerness to prove its dangers, and, perchance, to meet the fate that might attend them.

With every step, the aspect of the country grew more and more intricate. The fire-flies began to flash in the darker coverts, and the rank long grass, often matted and entangled, grew more perplexing to the horses, as the deep amber light of the declining sun, more richly luminous, but less radiant, told that the gloaming hour was shutting in. A balmy breathing fragrance hung in the air, such as should lull the soul to thoughts of love and heaven; and the very silence, like a pause in music, seemed a hushing up of nature before the night came on, with all her stars and eastern glory.

The file were cautiously traversing the



same sort of winding hollow, leading to a more deep and shady vale below; when as the sun shed its last flash of golden beams upon them, through a chasm in the crest of an over-hanging hill, it seemed to Vernon as if a visible blessing fell on each, in which he, like a wayward child, did not care to participate while impressed with thoughts so out of unison, so stern and moody.

First Javan passed, and as the rich light struck upon his dusky, half-clothed, pigmy form, fantastically crowned with crimson feathers, and mounted on a little half wild black horse of the country, his eye bright and piercing as a Hawk's, and his right arm drawn backward to cast the bullets on the instant: thus seen, the young Bosjesman seemed more like the imp of a magician leading the fated to their doom, than aught of human birth! He passed into the shade; and then came Drakenstein, lowering and sad; but still at intervals glancing from side

to side, and bending forward as one that listens. It was indeed so evident that the crisis was approaching that the dragoons reined up their horses, to have them under the better command, and the one on the right of Hugo had his hand under the flap of his holster ready to deal the pistol shot if called for.

Next advanced Bertha, smiling sweetly with inward joy, for her thoughts were of the future. It was the very look she wore when first Vernon had learnt to love, and now, clothed in the glancing radiance, she gleamed bright as the angel of a poet's dream!—That smile, so full of soft enchantment, had been the Siren of his fate,—and, sick at heart, he closed his eyes to avoid its fascination. She was gone, and the brass-bound crest of the last trooper shone clear as fire in the sun-lit space, when a ‘whurr!’—startling as the seamew's cry in the lull before a storm—struck upon his ear!—It was

the war-whoop Javan had learnt from his fathers:—the balls were thrown, the game of death at hand!

Vernon put his good horse on full speed to dash into the van, but before the noble animal had passed half the distance, with a desperate bound he sprung into the air, and then fell dead, shot through the brain!

Though not a soldier by trade, Vernon was armed, and could use his weapon with effect. In a moment he was upon his feet, and ready for the worst. A thin wreath of smoke drifted before him, but it was impossible to say from which side the shot had been fired. Of all fighting, bush-fighting is the most perplexing: it is no better than being caught by the rising tide under a precipice, when to stay is death, —or to seek the shelter of that or the other nook in the rock, but the choice of a grave!

Vernon felt the disadvantage, and remembering the words of Javan, he reserved his charge, and watched for the “shaking” of a

bush. All were still:—presently the rattling of carbines told that the dragoons were busy in the van, when he noticed a quivering of the boughs to the right. Running boldly forward, he fired at closer quarters, under the hollow of the branches. The report rang heavily, when it was answered by the wild crackling laugh of Cootje.

“Ah! ah!”—cried the young Boor—“you spoke o’ trapping a fox, Meester Vernon, and you’ve felt the wolf’s gripe!—Take advice;—give up th’ sport.—To speak stiff on the point, you’ve no better chance than a maid at fifty!—I’ve a dozen to one of Makanna’s long men and short roers, with Hottentots to boot:—give in.

Without answering a word, Vernon having hacked an opening with his sword, was breaking into the bush, when, with the common hunting trick of an Africander, Cootje threw himself, like a panther, flat on the top of its farther side, and rolling off the close-set foliage,

in a moment was standing on the open turf, with his piece reloaded, and on a fair par with his antagonist.

Incited by the furies of jealousy and blind rage, Vernon fired on the instant,—and without effect.

“Pooh, pooh!”—said Cootje smiling, and sportively tossing up his heavy gun, as a boy would a wand, and catching it again above his head—“I never made a target of man’s flesh yet, and won’t begin!—Ah, ah! we’ll have another hunt together, Meester Vernon:—there’s a time for all things, as Father says—come, come, give in!”

Provoked beyond measure at the nonchalance and courage of one he had despised, and still hated, Vernon, dropping his carbine, had recourse to his sword; and slashing at random, with tremendous force, shivered the upper part of the stock of Cootje’s muskettoon, who still kept his resolution of not firing, a forbearance very near costing him his life, as Vernon now

broke in upon his guard with a succession of desperate lunges.

The gleaming steel, swift as lightning, flashed within two inches of his breast before the young Boor was awakened to the danger; but then transformed by sudden rage, he became as it were a different creature. His open joyous countenance darkened almost to blackness, his forehead knit, and like those of an incensed bull, his eyes turned red as glowing coals! A staggering sidelong bound had saved him narrowly from the last fierce greedy thrust, when reversing the shattered muskettoon, he swung the ponderous piece butt foremost at the head of his advancing enemy. The blow was adroitly caught; but unable to withstand its violence, the sword snapped short, and falling with unslackened force, the iron-shod weapon scattered the brains of Vernon in the air.

Astounded with the awful result of his victory, Cootje stood as in a lethargy, gazing



on the dead,—until volleys of musketry at some distance in front, and the shrill cries of Mage made him apprehensive that his party had transgressed orders so far, as to fall into an open '*melange*' with the escort. As such an imprudence was likely to occasion a useless loss of life, Cootje immediately gave a signal for their retirement; and diving immediately under the leafy cover of the underwood, he advanced so as to obtain a secret view of what was going on.

The escort, with Miss Falkland, had so far descended towards the hollow vale before mentioned, as to have no chance of seeing any thing of Cootje's almost momentary combat. The shots fired by Vernon just before his death had, however, so far excited alarm, that two of the dragoons were riding up to ascertain its cause, when their horses were disabled, and the attack was immediately followed up with a running fire from the whole ambuscade that seemed to put the bushes in a flame.



As not a man fell, the object was evidently to intimidate. Encouraged by this circumstance, some of the other dragoons having dismounted, the whole party threw themselves into that part of the bush, in which they judged the enemy lay thickest; but in vain; the quick-eyed natives rigged themselves from one thorny hold to another, with the facility of serpents, and the Europeans, from their heavy accoutrements and want of habit, had no chance of overtaking them.

The game did not end here; for no sooner were the dragoons too far entangled, to recede, than some of their opponents rushed from the covert to disarm the two remaining soldiers left in charge of Drakenstein. It was at this moment that the second firing arose, and Cootje had just arrived at the critical juncture, when the troopers, dragged from their horses, but not disarmed, were engaged in a mortal struggle with some half-

dozen Amakossæ, while Drakenstein, taking advantage of the moment, was dragging at the bridle of Bertha's horse, and urging him forward.

In the meantime, Mage having fallen off her saddle, partly from fear, and partly to get out of reach of the shot, lay at her length in the grass, kicking and shrieking in all the sublimity of terror; while the dragoons, stuck fast in the thorny jungle, finding no egress, revenged themselves by firing on every tawny-skin that popped in sight, if but for a moment.

A Dutch Boor is not very nice about the life of a Native, but the score of casualties was now running too deep; and Cootje, thinking the affair might take an ugly turn, resolved to try a chance for cutting it shorter. Springing from his concealment amid a shower of balls, he was by the side of Mage in a moment; and in the next—the fair maid still screaming and sprawling—was

flung, like a fawn on the holsters and saddle-bow of the nearest steed, with Cootje mounted behind her ! Some of his Hottentots leaped on the backs of the other surviving horses, and all were off in a rattling trot after Old Hugo, who, with his fair prize, was now half a mile a-head.

Without horses, any efficient pursuit was impossible, and the Amakossæ in Cootje's service being aware of this, soon hid themselves in the surrounding underwood, while the discomfited dragoons were left to finish their useless fusilade with a volley of imprecations.

## CHAPTER VII.

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“ I have thought

Too long and darkly, till my brain became,  
In its own eddy boiling, and o'erwrought,  
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame.”

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

“ No, all is silent !—

Still as the breathless interval between  
The flash and thunder :—I must hush my soul  
Amidst its perils.”

WERNER.

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It was well for the zebra-hunting Lieutenant Pearlham, that he did not appear before his superior officer until after the abduction of Major Falkland, when the tale of his own mishap passed off with a far better grace, than a strict examination might have warranted.

As it was, the invading troops were placed in an awkward predicament. Having inflicted a severe chastisement on the natives, and made a large booty of cattle,\* their policy, in a military sense, was to retire without allowing time for the Amakossæ and other Chieftains to collect the warriors of their Tribes, for the purpose of impeding the homeward march. But this the private order of the Governor, for the recovery of Miss Falkland, and common humanity towards the Major, would not permit.

Further hostilities were also interdicted, as only likely to exasperate the Amakossæ against the prisoners, so unfortunately in their power. To remain stationary, till negotiations could be opened, seemed, upon the whole, most advisable; but this plan involved the loss of their allies, the Boors, who would not

\* Fourteen thousand head of cattle were seized, and one third of this *plunder* was given to Gaika, as a reward for his perfidy.

remain so long separated from their vrouws, and usual avocations.

To the other party, the late events had, on the contrary, given unlooked for advantages, though, after all, sadly clouded by the unexpected treachery of Drakenstein, and his hopeful son. From the first moment of granting assistance to Cootje, for the capture of Miss Falkland, Makanna had foreseen a succession of difficulties. Though with only a moiety of right, the amorous young Boor would prove, perhaps, too desirous of claiming the prize, as essentially his own!—And the proud fanatical Father would, doubtless, rejoice to show his contempt of ‘the heathen,’ by uniting in any plan that, after they had borne the toil and danger of the enterprize, would, in the sequel leave the Amakossæ the unrequited instruments of his ambition. To counterbalance this, was the hope of placing the wily Dutchman under a sense of obligation, that might assuage his



prejudices so far as to incline him to use his influence with the discontented Boors in favour of the avenging attack on the Colonial Authorities, which Makanna had long contemplated.

As matters turned out, the Chieftain was left to form a third hypothesis on no better premises than either of the foregoing; for, after a few days, the Amakossæ warriors, who had been detached for the service, returned, unaccompanied by Cootje, and without the prisoner. The story they told was short enough, but quite as unsatisfactory as the event itself! The report was, that some forty-eight hours after the Lady had fallen into his hands, Meester Hugo rewarded them with so prodigal an allowance of 'the fire water' (brandy) of the 'Macooas,' that, after being, as it were, mad for a time, they fell into a trance-like sleep. In this they continued for they know not what period, but long enough, at least, for the Dutchmen, and their Hot-



tentot followers, to convey away themselves, and the female prisoners, so completely out of reach, notwithstanding a most diligent search, that the bewildered savages very sincerely ascribed the whole exploit to the influence of magic, which is, indeed, their constant and only resource in a case of mystery. One relic was, however, left behind, in the shape of "a little yellow 'inja' (hound) of a Bosjesman," who, with the usual animosity of their tribe to the whole race, they had tried to spear half a dozen times on their return, but who had slipt his 'accursed little sallow carcass' out of danger with the subtlety of an 'impimpi' (cobra de capello.)

In other particulars there was no less reason for anxiety. A knowledge of the important services rendered to the perishing victims of the invasion at the secret caverns of the Karroo, had circulated throughout Caffrania with astonishing rapidity; and with aspirations of gratitude to the 'Inkos-enkula,' or Great Chief-

tain, as the people now delighted to call Makanna, were every where mingled anticipations of revenge, as success could not be doubted were they to seek the field with such a leader. The enthusiasm in favour of Makanna was at this period infinitely increased by the cessation of hostilities and unexpected halt of the troops, suddenly checked as it were, in the flood-tide of their power!—In other words, the arm of vengeance was palsied in the act of striking!—and this they universally considered as the result of his magical interference.

This to the suffering Amakossæ, delightful superstition pervaded every ‘Umzi;’ and bands of enthusiastic warriors from every horde, as with a simultaneous impulse, hastened to place themselves under the command of the Prophet Chieftain, with whom, as they believed, the ‘spirits of the dead,’ and ‘the vital energies of Nature,’ were co-operating powers!

As in former instances, Makanna again

felt the hazard of having tampered to a dangerous extent, with those wild chimeras of superstition, which when once created, soon grow beyond control, and like the fabled monster of philosophic daring, have no instinct, but to destroy the unfortunate author of their existence!

To have removed the present delusion of his followers, would have been at the same time to have defeated the past labours of his life, and fatally, to have undermined his influence for the future. The last was an alternative not to be thought of;—and yet the present circumstances brought his ambitious projects to a crisis almost equally intolerable. In the arrogance of their hearts, the assembled Chieftains were hourly craving the annihilation of the ‘Macooas,’ quailing already, as they thought, beneath his power!—And Laroon was no less in secret demanding a delay of hostilities, until at least, the safety of Miss Falkland and her Father were fully secured.

To preserve his own ascendancy, without gratifying the hopes on which it was built; to control but not extinguish the ardour of his followers; and more than all, to preserve the life of the Major from the unslacked vengeance of the Amakossæ, were cares, that every hour rendered more and more perplexing. As a counter excitement, hunting parties had been formed by Laroon, (Dushani) and nightly feasts with solemn rites, and war dances encouraged by Makanna. The former was still absent on a distant chase, and a festival of the latter sort was half concluded, when Makanna left his secret chamber in the recesses of the cavern, to mingle in the savage orgies without.

The way of the Chieftain, after passing a winding corridor scooped by the hand of nature through the living rock, brought him to the spot which had been chosen, on account of its security, as a dormitory for Major Falkland;—and here, oppressed with a mourn-

ful anxiety as to the future destiny of one, whose very age seemed to plead an exemption from suffering, he lingered and watched the slumbers of his prisoner.

The sleep of the aged is often so death-like in its deepness, and withal, so significant of the frailty of life, that it chills the beholder more than the contemplation of a corpse. There is the same gaunt sharpness in the sunk cheeks and lengthened visage;—the same dull leaden hue of the closed eyelids;—the same white bony smoothness of the forehead; but there is as yet, the invisible vapoury fleeting bond of existence!—‘the breath of life!’—yes, but so faintly does it issue, and the cold skinny chest heaves so feebly with its protracted ebb and flow, and the whole function seems withal so spent and powerless, that we might, indeed, believe that, were but the silvery moth that flits around to settle on those pallid lips, it then were lost for ever.

Such at least were the thoughts of Ma-

kanna, while gazing on the attenuated form of the old officer. The place was fitting, too, for solemn musings. Your halls of palaces have greater majesty in the hushing depth of solitude and silence, than if crowded with the tinsled cringing lackeys of greatness; and the pillared aisles, and canopied chancel, are most awful when we enter them alone in the gray obscurity of evening. But of these, the noblest and proudest in thrilling grandeur, are as nothing to the deep tremendous vaults that yawned around Makanna.

A lamp burnt brightly beside the simple couch of Major Falkland; but in these Titanian chambers of dreary emptiness, its light seemed less than the twinkling of a single star: yet still, the eye, grown cunning with the darkness, discerned a thousand fantastic resemblances in the half transparent stalactites that crowded the dim distance, till imagination challenged reason, that nature had some mystic meaning in these distorted



shadowy forms, that mimicked things of life, and human art, as half-awaking dreams realities.

In scenes such as these, the heart of Makanna had formerly swelled with triumphant aspirations of the future, until its beat was audible ; but now a thought of coming years hung on it with the leaden touch of palsy.

They say good men have bad presentiments,—warnings of evil as yet remote : let such things be, or not, the damp vapour, with sudden chill, now wrapt around the Chieftain cold as a shroud ; and the gasping suffocation of unbidden emotions gave, even then, a strangely conscious foretaste of the stifling pangs of drowning ;—remembered, perchance, in the agony of his last struggles, when the briny waves closed over the hope of many nations.\*

\* After his surrender to the English at Graaff Reynett, Makanna was placed, for the better security, in Robbin



Willing to shake off these uncomfortable feelings, Makanna sought the outward gallery of the cavern. An open space was now before him, black and vast, as the hall of Ebis in the fabled palace of Pandemonium. The strangely regular oblong chasm that forms the porch to the Congo caves, in the rocky sides of the 'Zwarte-Bergen,' was indeed visible, but so diminished by the long perspective, that it seemed not larger than the framework of a picture. Through this opening, softened by surrounding shadow, and bright from the contrast, as the illusions of fairy land, gleamed a moon-lit defile of rifted rocks, festooned with hanging woods; and, more remote, a screen of snow-capt mountains. And ever and anon, the fitful night-breeze came surging in, and, diving to the winding vaults below, awoke mysterious sounds,—sighings,

Island, and soon after, drowned in attempting to escape. Such, however, was the faith of the Kaffers in their Prophet, they they expect his reappearance even to the present hour!

and moans, that, fast receding, again broke indistinctly with murmuring wails, weak as the faltering sobs of agony, grown faint upon the verge of dissolution.

These earth-born voices rung with the awful witching symphony of imaginary music, heard in dreams, through the listening ear of the rapt Makanna, until his teeming fancy deemed them the inspiring sympathies of Nature, in her deep mysterious mood. Such hidden influences, that thrill our hearts, when the careering storm rushes abroad in majesty and might, or full of breathing sweetness, the misty curtains of the evening close, and love and silence glimmer in the rising stars that usher in the night.

The Chieftain found his troubled spirit soothed, but not for long. It is the inherent vice of energetic minds to disregard the rest they might enjoy, and wear themselves away with new excitement: and thus the grateful freshness of the mountain breeze was hardly felt, and the sweet view, mellowed in distance,

where Nature seemed to lie entranced in ambient light, soft and ethereal as the slumbering nymph that charms a poet's dream, was scarcely regarded, before came creeping in the serpent temptings of Ambition. Present obstacles were overlooked, as mariners forget the intervening waves, when the white cliffs they love come brightning up upon the dusky bosom of the ocean; and so Makanna's heated fancy shadowed out a throne! and for the future, wrought appliances and means, swift as in their tempest march the whirlwind pillars of the Desert swallow up the sand.

This might have lasted longer, but that sudden shoutings, screams, and shrill, wild laughter, as of a savage joy at pain, came on the wind. Nearer, and nearer yet, the horrid discord rolled forward upon the echoes, hoarse as the beatings of the rising tide, until impatient voices, even at the very porch, called on Makanna. A momentary pause ensued, no more than gave the awaiting crowd time but

to draw a deeper breath, and then a stunning crash of thousand voices, welcomed the Prophet Chieftain of the Amakossæ;—the ‘dread magician,’ as they deemed, come to command and conquer!

The carousal of the past evening had been carried too far to be easily controlled, and the consequent tumult was now running to a dangerous excess. The pantomimic dance, in which the flower-crowned maids of Amakossena feign so well love’s tender strife;—now sorrowful and mute,—now smiling into ecstasy! from the coy blandinage of sportive grace had grown too real in its dalliance; while, like affrighted fawns, the screaming fair ones sought a refuge in their mothers’ arms, or intercepted ran in desperation upon the dizzy ledges of the rocks, where skill and lightness gave security to weakness.

A little way beyond, were seen another group of fiery youths, who having still more completely drowned their senses under the

influence of the narcotic 'Dacha,'\* were now in the folly of an idle rivalry, running at full tilt, and dashing their naked heads together with the pertinacity of incensed bulls; and when at last overthrown, and rolling half stunned and blinded in the dust, still tearing at each other like famished wolves, as if mere physical endurance were a glory.

It was upon the whole but too evident, that the madness of the hour had been fostered, if not created for sinister purposes, by a malcontent party among the warriors, whom Makanna's supposed indecision had offended. Believing this, the Chieftain met the thronging crowd with a searching air of haughty severity, that hushed the stormy uproar like a charm; while gathering eagerly around, as if to mitigate the anger of his glance, the warlike Amakossæ, with one accord, in wild and pealing chorus, poured their battle song upon the midnight air.

\* 'Dacha,' a sort of hemp.

What though 'Macooas' death-balls fly,  
Swift as lightnings rend the sky ;  
And the jungle red with flame  
Might the raging Lion tame ;  
While glittering vengeful lances swarm  
Round us thick as waving corn :  
If there Makanna points the way,  
Heart, and life, and soul obey !

What though Death is waiting near !  
Who will dare to whisper fear ?  
For cannot he our 'Inkos' then  
From shadowy Kloof and distant glen,  
'Mid the battle's thundering storm,  
By the all prevailing charm,  
Bring our Fathers from the grave,  
Their sons to animate and save !

The pale 'Macooas' quake with dread  
When wrestling with the viewless dead :  
On their limbs that gripe shall hold  
Like the Boa's fatal fold !  
And though we see nor form nor face,  
They gasp !—they die !—in that embrace.  
When Makanna points the way,  
Heart, and life, and soul obey !

The song was ended, but still its sonorous  
echoes rang fitfully in the chasms of the neigh-  
bouring rocks, when, as with a simultaneous  
impulse, the warriors having separated them-



selves from the mass of the people, came forward in a circling sweep, solemn and sad as close the thunder clouds before a storm.

Twice had Makanna raised his head as if in act to speak, but still uncertain of their meaning, he paused; and yet, as if his silence was the mastery of strong emotion, his teeth clenched firmly as they closed, and as his eyelids dropped with the knitting of his brow, a gleam of fire flashed for an instant in his glance, and then his features became as tranquil in their pale stern fixture as the waves of a frozen sea, and but that still he stood, he seemed as one entranced, and lost to sense or motion.

The horrid rites, and terrific varieties of sound and gesture occurring in savage life, have, under the elements of a state of society so rude and simple, far more utility than may be imagined. Among the members of a tribe forming, as it were, but one extended family, living in close community, and under



the daily occurrence of reciprocal obligations, to punish a criminal is nothing less than to sacrifice a brother! The horror excited by the crime is often much worn away during the time occupied in proving its commission; and the sympathies of humanity, and the extenuations of circumstance, might plead to a dangerous extent in favour of the offender, were it not for the maddening excitement of some peculiar usage, which every savage people have substituted for those solemnities of public justice which are beyond their reach.

It is under the inspiration of this wild enthusiasm that the assassin is himself taught the bitterness of death, by those who but yesterday might have battled at his side, or with him shared their last draught of water on the parching sands of the desert. In the delirium thus excited it is not singular that bad men should succeed in hurrying the inexperienced into the commission of cruelty; or that the actors in such extravagancies

should become so far self-deluded as to experience even greater fear than they inspire.

It is from these circumstances that fortitude gives its possessor so much influence among savages. The man who remains calm and unshaken amid the terrific orgies that fill them with amazement, is to them a superior being, whom they willingly obey in the hope of sharing his security. Thus the stern serenity with which Makanna had met their thundering shouts of recognition; his apathy to the adulation of their martial chorus, and, more than all, the perfect abstraction which had followed filled them with inquietude.

That very night, the 'amapakati' of the different hordes had told their followers that the 'Inkoš-Enkulu' would lead them to the overthrow of the 'Macooas;' and now, when the glitter of his keen 'umkoneto' should have led them as a star through the black shadows of the forest, was he not become 'as a dead man to their hopes?'

The Chieftain stood thus musing on a shelf of rock that ran out parallel with the floor of the cavern ; a wasted fire burnt in a hollow to the right, and on the space in front, even to where the brink of the precipice far over-hung the deep ravine, the dusky warriors with waving plumes, painted shields, and gleaming ‘umkonetos,’ as ready for the combat, were crowded thick as sea-mews throng the storm-lashed islets of the deep. Among these, the ‘amapakati’ stood proudly apart, and as the silvery moonlight, with now and then a feeble ruddy gleam from the fire below struck on their glossy forms, clothed only by the kilt and open robe that left their noble port, and finely developed limbs exposed in all the luxuriance of manly beauty, the visions of the Heroic Poet of antiquity seemed realized, his demi-gods and heroes were again created !

In this group, were the greater number of those who had grown discontented with Makanna, and now their restless eyes and

smothered whispers, plainly evinced that their late disappointment had but imbittered their former animosity. At length an aged warrior, of gaunt forbidding aspect, who had been silently listening to the sinister suggestions of his comrades, came suddenly forward, and fearlessly advancing towards Makanna, said haughtily with a glance and smile of scorn:

“What, is the ‘Inkos’ sad as a woman heavy with travail, when the songs of the brave glow in the hearts of the bold, even as living sparks in flax, or lightning in the thatch!—mayhap the ‘ubootie’ (bewitching matter) is hard to find; then let the ‘Inkos’ dig with the sharp ‘umkoneto’ in the hearts of the ‘Macooas,’ and it shall appear!”

“What!” said Makanna, lifting his eyes up slowly on the speaker, as one awaking from a deep sleep,—“what shall be answered when words are but a sound!—the aged without wisdom, are as the Eagle without her plumes!—the day of the ‘Macooas,’ is fixed, but shall

not the green corn be left to grow heavy for the sickle?—shall not the nest of the Scorpion remain till the grass is dry for the firing?—the doom of the ‘Macooas’ shall be when the Brown Men swarm upon the hills as locusts in the air! and the charge of our Warriors shall be as the rush of Buffalos in a straight place, where none can turn aside. In that day, our young men grown weary of the death-flashing guns, and breaking their ‘umkonetos,’ shall find a sword, and quench the fire that consumes them in the heart’s-blood of the ‘Macooas.’”

The battle-whoops of the assembled Horde burst fiercely around, loud as the roarings of a storm, while Makanna, to illustrate his new hint for close fighting, broke his lance in twain, and striking with the bladed head a sham inverted blow on the breast of the obtrusive warrior, before him laid his heavy-boned carcass senseless at his feet. This latter experiment was perhaps going a little too far; at

least some of the old man's friends who thought he was actually slain, were loud in their complaints, and a tumult ensued, of which another party of malcontents availed themselves to execute a project, that they had for some time had at heart.

This was the sacrifice of Major Falkland ; and Makanna had hardly time to turn round, before his unfortunate prisoner was dragged from the cave, and surrounded with a swarm of Amakossæ, who, many of them having lost near relatives in the war, and being moreover full of excitement from the effects of the ' dacha,' were determined on destroying past all hope of redemption ! at another time the sang froid and martial air of the old officer, might have charmed the gallant Amakossæ into mercy,—but from a crowd of half-drunken barbarians, and goaded on too by a thirst of vengeance unfortunately so just, no such golden hope might be indulged, and the only question with them was, how far life should

be prolonged, for the sake of essaying new ingenuities in the art of applying torture.

In savage communities, circumstances frequently arise, paramount to all authority, and Makanna felt that this was one of them. The late carousal had left the major part of the people insensible to argument, and force was out of the question, not only on the account of numbers, but as the Chieftain felt that the first blow struck, would be the signal of instant death to the prisoner. These melancholy thoughts were passing through the mind of Makanna, when the appearance of the returning hunting party on the summit of a distant hill, gave him a fair pretence for delay, as it was only decent, that their absent comrades should have a vote on a point so universally *amusing*, as the sort of death the poor Major was to die. The dispute was indeed, even then, running high, as to whether the 'Macooa' should be 'toasted' out of existence by the application of red hot stones,



placed gingerly, so as to exercise a slow scorching influence on the insides of the thighs and arms, his miserable extremities being previously tied to stakes planted out for the purpose: or, whether he should be suspended by the limbs to the branches of separate trees, and to be kept, when thus agonizingly stretched out, on the full swing, head downwards, over a small half-suffocating fire of dried leaves.

The balance between these most *accomplished* modes of torture, appeared to preponderate so little on either side, as to extremity of suffering; and the partisans for each, were so pertinaciously attached to their own *delicate* views, that much argument naturally ensued. Fortunately, the Major knew not a syllable of the Amakossanian lingo, so that he escaped the preliminary horrors of a learned dissertation on his physical capacity for the endurance of pain; but as the advocates on the one side, began to

collect all the large round pebbles in view, and those on the other, to try the strength of two stunted camel-thorn trees, some very uncomfortable surmises crossed his brain, as to the chance of an exit, not the most dignified, by the by, for a British officer, viz. that, by either stoning or hanging.

By this time, the craggy path from the mountains had been passed, and, amid the joyous shouts of ‘ Zingela ! Zingela ! ’ (the Hunters ! the Hunters !) Laroon and his followers rejoined their friends. Habit, and the watchfulness instilled by a constant sense of danger, had, by this time, given the Creole so much the air of an Amakossa, that in his wild costume of spotted skins and purple plumes, his nearest friends would not have recognised him. The difference in the tinge of his complexion, too, was, by the natives, considered only as a trace of Maldrona’s malice, and therefore served but to aid his concealment, and increase their wonder at his deliverance.

The trophies of the chase were not beneath the fame of the 'bold Dushani.' The 'Insangue' (or Standard-pole,) carried before him, was decked with the tails of two Elephants; and the 'Ingegu' (pack-ox,) was heavily laden with the largest ivory, and finest skins. On either side, followed a train of daring hunters, fantastically robed with the hides of newly-killed Antelopes. Grown hoarse with the vehemence of their strange whooping cries of sport, these youths were now silent; but each, as he bounded gaily forward, bore aloft, with savage zest, a fresh dismembered haunch of venison, or waved a battle-axe, or a spear, still reeking with recent gore.

From a reverence, inspired by its peaceful nature and wonderful sagacity, none of the Kaffer tribes ever make the flesh of the Elephant an article of food; and so far is this feeling carried, that when one is slain its proboscis is always buried—an honor of the highest degree—as among themselves only the

Chieftain and his family receive the rite of sepulchre. Even in the act of hunting the noble animal to the death ; and while a grove of spears are quivering in his bleeding bulk, they loudly disclaim any idea of malice, and assure him of the ‘ infinite respect they bear him,’ with quite as much sincerity, and little less absurdity than an English ‘ champion of the prize-ring’ shakes hands with his antagonist immediately before he commences to pummel in his eyes, or burst the vessels on his brain by a blow on the jugular.

As is common on such occasions, the hunting train were followed by a man, whose sole office it was to mourn ‘ the mighty dead !’ Unarmed, disfigured with dust, and hideously smeared with badges and streaks of white clay, as the insignia of grief, he bore upon his arms, carefully wrapt up in a panther’s skin, the trunks of the two ‘ Inglovu,’ (Elephants) that had fallen beneath the weapons of his companions ; and continually chaunted, with a wailing voice :—

“The ‘Inglovu’ is a great Captain; and ‘his trunk is his hand:’—We will bury it deep where the Hyæna shall not find it:—His grave shall be as that of an Inkos! its grass the ox shall not eat, nor shall the earth be dug as a garden.

“The ‘Inglovu’ turned upon us in the battle; and some he slew. He held up his trunk in the air, and trumpeted like a bold captain calling upon his host. The ground trembled with his tramplings—the stones were ground into powder—and the tall trees crushed as stubble beneath the foot of the reaper.—He charged through the jungle where the earth was not firm enough for his weight, and his legs sunk as in a pit.

“He had no shield against the spears, and they were sharp. The ‘Inglovu’ is proud; his heart is as that of an ‘Inkos-Inkulu;’ he looked on death with a steady eye. The ‘ulango’ of the ‘Inglovu’ shall not haunt us, for he died as a Warrior in the battle!—We will bury ‘his hand’ in the grave of a King;

and our Chieftains shall not feast on the day of his death, for he was brave, and a mighty Lord in the forest !”\*

The meeting between Makanna and his disguised preserver was one of deep but smothered emotion. The great stake held by the latter, in the life and welfare of the Major, was not unknown to the chieftain; and now as they conversed apart in all the perplexity of fear and uncertainty, a fresh reason, and one of great political importance, for the preservation of the prisoner, was adduced. While engaged in the late hunting excursion, Laroon, under the assumed character of Dushani, had been met by a party from the camp, who had fully negotiated with him for the restoration of Major Falkland, on the ground that the troops would then

\* After the death of an elephant, the hunters always celebrate the event by a feast; but as the ‘Inglovu’ is actually considered as an animal of a superior order, their own Inkos, as a brother potentate, must fast on that day from self-respect.



be immediately withdrawn, and an amicable understanding opened with the natives.

It seemed that, in coming to this easy conclusion, the English commander had been very much actuated, by a report of the accidental death of Miss Falkland, at the passage of a dangerous ford, which, it was said, Drakenstein had forced her to attempt on horseback. This melancholy circumstance had been verified, it seemed, by some very circumstantial inquiries instituted, under the superintendence of Lieutenant Pearlham. So, at least, said the 'Macooas'—and, if Laroon had too much previous information to believe a syllable of the matter, he was not the less annoyed by the reflection, that she was unprotected, and in the hands of the royster Cootje, or, at best, in the power of the sanctimonious trickster, his Father. Under these circumstances, the only chance of effecting her rescue, as it appeared, was for him to surrender at the Camp, and, by a bold avowal of previous facts,



to cause the pursuit and arrest of the Dutchman and his adherents. This plan had been simple and effective, but his engagements with Makanna were a bar to its fulfilment, and now the imminent danger of the Major made it a secondary object.

The parley between the Chieftains had given time for the desperate swarm around the prisoner, to palaver each other so far into good humour, as to unite in a plan for the alternate exercise of their infernal ingenuity, so long as nature might endure the agony; and the lot for the first essay having fallen to the advocates for a 'slow roast,' they began to heap pebbles on the fire with as much hilarity as if preparing to barbique a hog. From the first Makanna, with every mark of sincere grief, had pointed out to his friend the impossibility of averting the diabolical outrage about to ensue.

"Would the sacrifice of my life avail,"—said the generous Chieftain,—“I would bound

among them as the lion, when the unclean wolves would mar his prey!—but alas, they are mad with ‘dacha’ and revenge; the groans of the victim to them will be sweet as the babbling of the fountain, to him that was dying of thirst!—Behold, even now the demon of blood hath made their eyes red as the living flame with rage!—I will cover my head with ashes, and stand apart, for the Evil Spirits of the night have possessed the heart of my people, as the whirlwind of the desert snatcheth up the sand!”

At this moment, as if seized with sudden frenzy, the whole assembly rushed to the place of execution; and, as they closed in one dense eddying mass, each struggling for the breath he drew, it seemed as if the helpless object of their rage, would be trampled into the dust.

For an interval, the hoarse din of contending voices rose loud as the hurtling of a storm!—and then, again, all was still, while

a bare muscular arm, with a knife in the hand, appeared from the centre of the crowd, as a signal, that the victim was being bound for the torture. Another instant, and that instrument had been used in ripping off the finger and toe nails, preliminary to the hellish rites that follow, when Laroon, whose brain was all on fire, threw himself like a thunderbolt among them.

The crowd was so closely packed, that a horse at full speed could not have broken through, and, having leapt over the first few ranks, the Creole won his way by tumbling to the centre.

The pale and sunken face of the horror-struck victim, the glowing red hot stones, ready knife, and leathern thongs, drawn tight almost to bursting on the ankles, and the lurid fiendish eyes that gleamed around on every side, were the vision of a moment, and then arose an uproar, as of the upturning of the ocean, when the earthquake is abroad—shrieks!—blows!—and crushing pressure.

During the turmoil of a mortal struggle, all consciousness to the lapse of time and outward circumstance is obliterated in the absorbing interest of self-preservation. We have neither thought nor feeling: it is enough to live!

So was it with Laroon; and when he recovered perception, all he knew was present weakness, from past exertion. He looked around, and beheld that every thing was strangely changed. The prisoner, unbound, and covered with an 'ingubo,' was sitting alone on a fragment of rock, and far behind a dusky, semicircular rank of Amakossæ, fully armed, were marshalled as if for some great enterprize. All was silent, save the sounding footsteps of Makanna, as he slowly paced the foreground of the rocky promontory on which the crowd had gathered. The eagle-eye of the Chieftain rolled with that indescribable ferocity, that overawes us in the angry savage; nor, in the present instance, was it the less appalling for the stern dignity of the noble countenance it lighted. Instead of the ashes of the mourner

the head of Makanna was now too crowned with the expanded pinions of the blue crane, the Amakossena plumes of war, and as he passed majestically forward, his limbs, and form, all glistening with sibile, bright as burnished steel, he seemed a creature created but for war and glory; invulnerable and fatal.

With burning brain, and eyes still dizzy from exertion, Laroon had still sufficient consciousness to have asked some questions of the past, but that the Chieftain motioned him to silence, and at the same time raising his panther-skin 'ingubo,' still dyed with the blood of recent combat, gave him a token that the danger was not over. Presently the armed host behind, having broken the ominous silence they had hitherto preserved, Makanna came up, saying in a low and cautious tone—"Be not deceived; I have conquered but to yield.—Your life is saved; but the incensed people will not refrain their banquet of blood longer than the coming dawn:—it is ordained

that then the 'Macooa' dies.—We have no substitute!"

"Yes,"—hastily replied the Creole; "my love, nor less my honour,—for I pledged his safe return,—demand the sacrifice!—the coppery stain that makes me seem a Kossæ shall be removed; and as a detested 'Macooa' I'll proudly meet the death they proffer.

"Remember your oath!"—

The features of the Chieftain seemed not to have moved as the words passed from his lips; but the mysterious light again shone in his eyes, which in the wilderness had filled the heart of Lároon with so much inquietude; and as the abhorred nature of the compact recurred to his mind, the Creole felt again as in the presence of one who had a sinister and controlling influence upon his destiny.

"Yes, your oath!"—with an icy solemnity rejoined the Chieftain;—"and on the same penalty, seal me a second, and all shall yet be well."

“Name your conditions!”

“Your love and honour pledged, it seems, demand the safe return of this old man, even at the peril of so young a life as yours!—But was there no pledge to *Him*, no restitution to be made?”

“Oh yes!” cried Laroon, as his dusky countenance grew crimson with emotion—“and to redeem it I would give twenty lives!—But how can she be saved, unless your league with young Drakenstein can be renounced. The former obligation of the vow clings with serpent coil around my heart, and keeps me from the English camp, the only step that might secure her safety.”

“Stratagem and time may accomplish more!”—replied Makanna, in that deep energetic tone that in itself inspires confidence.

“But those unknown conditions?”

“Yes!—say that the old soldier were with his friends, and that you had indeed the power to ratify your promise, and re-



store his daughter to his arms! Nay, pause—then comes the precipice that mars your path; the canker-worm that eats away the rose before you pluck it! Say that this were done, and that the hoary-headed veteran's blessing had cancelled every doubt, and she you love all joyful tears and burning blushes, sunk silent in your arms!—Could you then leave her to the chances of the ocean?—Return?—Resume your Amakossena garb, and share again the cavern-home of him, who only lives to fight for freedom? The time is fixed when the Red Men shall gather on the hills, thick as the waving grass that clothes the Karroo in the spring; and if Dushani with Makanna led them on, the pale 'Macooas' might be their friends, but never more their masters! Resolve, and suddenly!—the morning star grows dim—the dawn may come too soon!”

The very spirits of some men have a sympathetic influence on each other, as mu-

sical strings when tuned in unison—the one cannot sound without awakening the hidden melody of the other. So was it with Laroon; the high impassioned nature of Makanna was but a reflection of what his own less ardent nature might have been, had not the habits of peaceful society, and the soft entrancement of love subdued its wildness. In the present proposition there was that which both inspired fear and allured consent. The bearings of the plan were more circumstantially stated;—the momentary dangers of delay were self-evident, and with a hesitating voice, and palpitating heart, the second oath was taken!

“Now,”—said Makanna, with a half-serious air of pleasantry—“Now must come the magic of the spell that crowns our enterprise! But fear not that—‘the secret foundations of the rocks shall be scattered in the air;’ and ‘the mountains wrapt in flame as with a garment,’ before our purpose

shall miscarry. The dusky children of the desert have grown wanton in the power of their number. Their pride shall be humbled, and they shall learn that the word of Makanna is stronger than a host!"

Again the countenance of the Chieftain assumed that air of terrific grandeur, which, together with his disinterested patriotism, served not less than his prophetic pretensions to fascinate and overawe, and, at last, enabled him to coalesce the rival hordes of Cafarania, and lead them in one united body against the foreign foe it was his hope to overcome.

Laroon observed, with alarm, that Makanna was rapt in one of those lofty contemplations of the future which often rendered him dangerously forgetful of the lapse of time; and as the snowy summits of the mountains already betrayed a rosy tinge, he urged the necessity of dispatch with a vehemence that gained attention.

The manner of the Chieftain was at once changed ; and with all the precision of a military man, he explained to Laroon the steps it would be necessary to pursue with their probable consequences. In the first place, it appeared, that to guard against any sudden attack upon their cavern, the Chieftain had long since constructed mines in the fissures of the rocks about its entrance. The promontory on which they stood was an example ; and, as he said, a single spark would have hurled it in a thousand fragments to the depths below, while a train of powder to be laid on the surface behind the space occupied by the horde, when fired, would throw the sere, long-tufted guinea-grass on the side of the ' Zwartberg ' into a belt of flame they would find it impossible to pass.

With these intentions, the first object was to remove the old officer a few moments previous to the blasting of the rock, so that

the Amakossæ, who had directed him not to stir under pain of death, might not have time to interfere; and previously to lay the train in such a way as might evade their attention. These matters accomplished, Laroon and the Major, with a guide, to be furnished for the purpose, were to proceed to the foot of a hill in view, where Makanna had a party posted, who would take charge of Major Falkland, and render him up to the English, in accordance with the stipulation already made. It would then be the duty of the guide to lead Laroon on the track traversed by Drakenstein in the abduction of Bertha; but having arrived in the vicinity of the Dutchman's present abode, no attempt was to be made to liberate the lady until they were joined by Makanna, as without his presence any such effort would be deemed an infraction of the oath.

Laroon had listened with an earnestness that hardly gave him time to breathe; but

when the statement was concluded, and he found that Makanna proposed to take no share in the opening of the adventure, he felt as one stunned with an unexpected blow!—Without Makanna, the whole plan seemed a wild chimera, no better than a dream; and something of this sort he took care to say, though feelings of vexation rendered the words almost inaudible.

The answer of the Chieftain was sad in tone, but resolute.—“The expedient is desperate indeed; but what of that, we have no other, *all* will depend upon the guide!”

“Yes,”—replied Laroon, with the animation of a fresh awakened hope of some unknown but powerful assistance,—“all will depend upon the ‘guide!’”

“Right!—it must!—it will!—Watch his every motion, if Love or Life is dear! Yes, all will depend upon the guide: I have him in the cavern,—he shall be here anon;—remember, he is black.”



“Black, indeed; but——”

“But what?”—exclaimed Makanna, cutting short the sentence with that abrupt wildness that often possessed him, and with eyes that shone with a light of smothered irony:—“your guide is but an “inga!” (a dog).

The Creole started as one that stumbles on a serpent in the dark, and then a shudder of measureless rage palsied every muscle, and he remained cold and motionless until the Chieftain had re-entered the cavern. The first impulse was to follow, but then the Amakossæ, who imagined that Makanna had withdrawn because the glimmering promise of the dawn then told that the time of torture was at hand, poured forth a shrill demoniac howl that chained him to the spot in anticipation of instant mischief.

Overwhelmed with contradictory emotions, and exhausted by exertions beyond his age, Major Falkland heard their terrific cries with a Stoical indifference, and when Laroon at-



tempted to arouse him, and by signs promised to defend him to the last, the old man merely shook his head and sunk again into his former attitude of weariness and stupor.

— Incensed by these circumstances still farther at what he now considered the treacherous preconcerted sacrifice of the prisoner by Makanna, Laroon was on the point of rushing to avenge himself on the Chieftain or perish in the attempt,—when a rough, ill shapen dog was seen clambering up the rocky ridge that arose above the entrance of the cavern.

The crags were so steep and slippery, that the beast could, at times, only win his way by clinging with his teeth to some roots, that, here and there, hung out from the fissures, in which bushes had formerly grown. It was an odd sort of path to be chosen by a dog; nor did it seem less singular, when the animal, having thus scaled a precipice, and got in the rear of the armed Amakossæ, began to crawl backwards and forwards in the long grass

beyond, as if afraid of observation, but still careful to traverse a semicircular sweep behind them. Had the train of powder mentioned by Makanna been laid, this was precisely the situation it should have occupied. There was something in the matter more than natural: the dog was strangely uncouth, but still the shaggy cur was so small, that there was no chance of its being a man so concealed, and the Creole felt totally at a loss to account for an agency, that nothing short of human comprehension could have been expected to effect.

Laroón, in childhood, had often listened to the wild legends of the ogre necromancy, and now the uneasy consciousness of his second compact, with its abhorred penalty,—the seeming treachery of Makanna, and the strange occurrence of the moment, hurried his feelings, and filled his mind with confusion.

The 'black guide,' whether dog or demon, was evidently doing his work with masterly

precision, when the eastern superstition, that, if a living body assumed by the 'Accursed One,' for purposes of evil, be slain, the ultimate event will be happy, crossed his thoughts like the remembrance of a dream; and, false or true, he resolved that the 'familiar' of his treacherous ally, as he then deemed the Chieftain, should feel the edge of his weapon. The dog, having, by this time, completed his line of circumvallation, was now descending to the terrace-like promontory in front, where Laroon stood prepared to brain him with his battle-axe, when, as if aware of his intention, the creature passed out of sight under the verge of the precipice, where the footing was too dangerous to admit of pursuit, and then, turning suddenly, ran forward, and fell in a crouching attitude at the feet of the Major.

Startled by a melancholy howl, Laroon looked around, and beheld the animal attempting in vain to arouse his old friend, by every device of canine sagacity; and so strictly

was each action that of a dog, that he felt half ashamed of his murderous intention. Just then, the creature's head was uplifted in drawing at the Major's cloak, and the Creole saw, with astonishment, that its orbits were as those of a scull,—dark, fathomless, and empty.

The former idea returned; the keen weapon was again swung aloft, when, with a faint shriek, the form became erect, its breast, covered with wild and tangled curls of brindled hair, burst open, and, in the cavernous void within, dilated with fear, and sparkling as the self-lit carbuncle, a pair of human eyes gleamed like tapers in a vault. In the next moment, a little face and neck protruded from amid the shaggy curls. There was a subtle meaning in the diminutive countenance, shaded with elfish locks of raven blackness, as if the love of mischief almost conquered fear; and a grace in the turn of the nut-brown neck, round which a string of large pearls hung in lumi-

nous beauty, that would have restrained a ruder hand than that of Laroon.

As if enough had been explained, the doggish disguise was being resumed, and the fairy form receding between the valve-like folds of its hairy envelope, had strangely vanished, when the old Major started to his feet, and, with a fearful energy, snatched wildly, but in vain, at the mysterious form before him. The creature eluded his grasp, and, darting off, was presently at the head of an antelope track, leading through the ravine beneath, and in the direction of the hill pointed out by the Chieftain.

“What!” — cried the Major, awakened into a sudden frenzy, — “was it not enough to murder my sweet child, my Bertha, but that the Imps of Darkness must come, tricked out in all her little ornaments, and mock me into madness! When last I touched those pearls, it was to clasp them round her neck: and I will have them once again, though he

that wears them were sunk within the fiery billows of his home. Come on!—The Demon flies!—Follow!”

“Follow!—Follow!”—cried a shrill small voice, as if it were an echo, but which, Laroon instantly recognised as that of Javan, with which he had been familiar at the ‘Zee-koe-Gatten’ The mystery was dispelled, and with it, passed away the suspicion against Makanna. The instinct possessed by the little ‘bosjesman,’ in common with his race, for traversing the depths of the forest, might render him a most efficient guide in tracking Drakenstein to his secret retreat; and, with a heart bounding in all the transport of anticipated success, the Creole needed no second challenge to follow the Major.

A few moments brought them to the brink of the ravine, a chaos of mossy crags and leafy umbrage. The path shot down almost perpendicularly, into this den of darkness; and, like most others of the sort, the track



having been originally formed by water, was thickly fringed with dry and naked roots. Among these, at some few yards within, was Javan, slipping off his black disguise, as a serpent casts his slough; whether it was the unequivocal laughter of the boy, for Javan was in an ecstasy of delight at the successful issue of the stratagem; or that the exertion scattered the distempered dream of fancy, Major Falkland was now sufficiently himself, to comprehend the nature of the device, so far, at least, as that it was one intended for his rescue, and was making signs of gratitude, both to Laroon and the boy, when the pealing shouts of the Savages were again heard.

The Creole had only time to thrust the Major beneath the brink of the ravine, when the yells were succeeded by a whizzing, hurtling shower of 'umkonetos.' They fell short, and he again looked out, in expectation of a pursuit. The Amakossæ, who had not descended from the adjacent shelf of rock,



were now disputing violently among themselves; while the azure war-plumes of Makanna might be noted moving to and fro amid the tumult, like some brilliant sea-bird, storm-tost on the dusky bosom of a wave.

Just at this juncture, a long trailing cloud, of leaden hue and fantastic form, grew visible among the snowy pinnacles of the distant mountains, and lying so motionless and distinct, that it gave the idea of some vast reptile resting amid their icy hollows. The eye had hardly observed this object, and it was one of those creations of the elements that none could overlook, when, by some electrical attraction, it broke asunder, and the disk of the rising sun shone palely through its vapoury exhalations.

This was the preconcerted signal for the infliction of the torture:—the sacrifice that was to assuage the long-treasured vengeance of the Amakossæ. A paltry boon, but still

some counterpoise of human agony for the dying shrieks of their wives and little ones, who had perished by the death-balls of the pitiless 'Macooas;' and for the low appalling moans of those, whose lives were rotting from them, by festering wounds, beneath the shade of the cavern, or, in the wild jungle, where the unfortunates had sought a refuge that soon would prove a grave.

Yes, it was the hour of doom;—dear to the Savage, yearning for justice unappeased, as the hot blood that flows around his heart; and now, the Amakossæ hailed it with a thundering whoop of ecstasy, for the flight of the destined victim would but give the zest of a hunt, to the certain festival of blood and torture. Laroon gazed, as if spell-bound to the spot,—a horrible doubt oppressed him; he knew the usage, another shout for the onset, and all was lost.

It came, but before the cliffs had time to answer with their echoes, the air darkened

amid a general concussion, and a stunning rumbling crash left the ear without the power of distinct perception.

The mine had been fired, and as the sulphur clouds of white smoke drifted away, and the darkening showers of sand were spent, its effects became visible in the appearance of a deep, black chasm, where the promontory had stood, and in the piles of blasted rocks that lay scattered in the glen beneath. Sudden as had been the blow, it seemed that some of the Amakossæ had been swifter in their eagerness for vengeance, as the mangled remains of three or four, who had leaped when shouting from the rocky shelf above, and thus became involved in the explosion, were horribly plastered around in bloody patches on the rifted crags.

The Savages, who in their total ignorance of the cause, ascribed the event to supernatural agency, connected with the anger of Makanna, were huddled together like a swarm of bees

around the porch of the cavern, while the Prophet Chieftain himself stood alone on the spot they had quitted, rapt in the silent contemplation of the scene.

Signs of returning boldness were to be observed among the Amakossæ, who doubtless would soon have had recourse to the circuitous path behind for the recovery of their prisoner, when they found a new cause of alarm, as the train of gunpowder in the long grass having been lighted, there gathered fast behind them a deluge of flame and fire.

Filled with astonishment and gratitude at so unexpected a preservation, Major Falkland became altogether passive under the direction of Laroon, as both followed the swift footed Javan through the wildest paths of the wilderness, as such would best afford concealment from any wandering horde that might be marching to join Makanna at the caverns of the Congo.

If Laroon found it difficult, on this occa-

sion, to preserve, as his oath enjoined, the indifference of a stranger, and a Kaffer Chieftain, towards the amiable and gallant old officer in whose welfare his heart was so deeply interested, how much greater was his impatience for the happy moment, which having placed the Major in safety, would leave himself at freedom to engage in that dearer enterprise, on which the happiness of one, infinitely more precious to the impassioned Creole than fame, fortune, or life ! so fearfully devolved.

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CHAPTER VIII.

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“ O ! come ye here to fight, young lord,  
Or come ye here to play,  
Or come ye here to drink good wine  
Upon the wedding day ?”

OLD SCOTCH BALLAD.

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MANY, and sad, are the legends of crime and sorrow, which owe their origin to the fierce inroad of the natives under S’Lhambi, and none is more appalling than the fate of the family of Henrik Van Sluysken.

Rich, profligate, and cruel, this powerful Boor had long held but a sorry reputation among his neighbours. The old had a strange tale of a wealthy traveller, who died suddenly



beneath his roof. The labour on his domain was performed by wretched worn out slaves, whom he was reported to have kidnapped when children from distant plantations, and his lonely house being situated on the coast, he was suspected, too, of a connexion with a gang of pirates, then infesting the Indian Ocean.

Even darker stories than these were told of the disappearance of two of his wives; for so rich a man as Henrik Van Sluysken was never long in want of a bride, though Heaven (as the people said for his sins) had hitherto denied him children. A third wife, with her infant offspring, perished in childbed; but with the perseverance of a patriarch, the ancient royster again poured forth the soft complaint of love, "and was a thriving wooer!" A fourth bride, in the luscious, full blown beauty of two-and-twenty, came from Cape Town, nothing loth, to surrender her maiden charms to an amorous dotard, for the inherit-



ance of whose wealth her youth seemed to give her a sufficient guarantee:—so perhaps had imagined others, but this last had no chance of trying their experience!

The preparations for the wedding were prodigal to the pitch of absurdity. Had the old sinner foreseen that he had but a day to live, and resolved to devote its fleeting hours to successive excesses of sensual pleasure, no human means in that wild country could have rendered them more complete; nor had “The Old Man o’ the Mountain,” of eastern fable, a more seductive terrestrial paradise for the young Houris of his harem, than Henrik, proud of his blooming bride, had prepared for her reception.

His ample gardens, the marvel of the country, were then (for it was summer) redolent with fruit and blossom, one gorgeous scene of varied luxuriance. And the house too, built after the Spanish fashion, with balconies and open galleries, had been fresh decked for the

occasion, with hangings of Persian silk, Turkey carpets of richest dye, sofas soft as the cygnet's breast, and pictures which mimicked all that amorous poets dream.

The bridal morning came, bright and glowing, as if Nature had preordained it for a holiday; and all within the home of Henrik was jocund as the sun-lit flowers hanging around its porch. Unbridled license ruled the hour! Too soon, to shun the highly seasoned spicy viands, the sparkling wines, that mantled as with life within the glass!—the gay voluptuous dance, where beauty lulled with music, wooed to pleasure!—These were the only faults that might not be forgiven.

The queen of this unbridled festival became enchanted with its adulation; the flashing lights seemed brighter than the day's effulgence, and as her heart drank in the fragrance of the living flowers that canopied her bridal couch of glistening satin, she thought not that their charms were equalled by their frailty.

Hating, as he was shunned, Henrik Van Sluysken had bidden no neighbour to his wedding;—still there was no lack of guests, male and female: where they came from was never learnt, and none survived to return.

Though not invited, curiosity, and still more the love of mischief, for they contemplated a false alarm, by way of frolic; and *Iago-like*—"though that his joy were joy, to throw some changes of vexation on't,"—had tempted a party of young Boors to secrete themselves in a plot of Indian corn adjacent to the house.

As evening deepened into night, the sounds of merriment grew more and more confused in the chaotic roar of a bacchanalian carousal. The chorus drowned the music by its loudness, and the wild trappings of the dance re-echoed from the darkness without, heavy as the charging of a squadron. The windows, except that of the bridal chamber, were all open, and the rooms within dazzling with lights, and

filled with moving figures in every variety of splendid habiliment.

The retirement of the happy pair was to be the signal for the intended alarm; and now the chill night-air, and the constant rustling of the snakes and other reptiles, who for some hours had been pursuing their nocturnal gambols, rendered this waiting any thing but pleasant to the ambushed party, when the passage of the bride to her apartment, along the open corridor, gave them a promise of relief. She was preceded by a young girl, whose downward glance, and pallid cheek, bore an interesting evidence to her own timidity and affectionate emotion. The bride herself had not a trace of either: her look was hurried; the liquid radiance of her deep-lashed eye told of triumph—not that of love, but rather of conscious beauty; and the elastic naïveté of her step accorded with the peachy bloom, which nevertheless, as the door of the apartment opened, deepened into a blush of

such intensity, that her face, neck, and bosom were equally suffused with one bright flame of rosy light.

The young Boors had held their breath from the feelings of the moment, as the fair ones passed like a vision in the distance, and they had hardly got out some rockets, and other matters of their boyish device, before the pale maiden returned with an air of such sweet modesty, that they half relented at the thought that their mad-brained frolic might give her a more real cause for inquietude.

The Romeo of the night, heated with wine and passion, came next, staggering impatiently across the corridor. The sight of the old voluptuary restored their appetite for mischief, and all was ready, when the low signal 'whurr' of the savage caught their attention. In a moment each man was cowering upon the earth like a hare upon her form. A word, a breath, but the rustle of a leaf, had sealed their fate! Of this they were fully aware, and although the cold drops of awful

excitement stood upon their brows, as they began to think that they were in the track of the coming party, all remained silent as the grave!

The file of strangers came on with a steadiness that evinced they had some fatal purpose to fulfil, and so perfect was their discipline, that the quick light step of the whole party fell as that of one man. In a few seconds, they were visible in full march along the edge of the Indian corn plot. There were some forty or fifty, each plumed and dusky warrior bearing his shield, battle-axe, and javelins.

A low whisper passed from each to each, rapid as the running sparkle of a train, and the party were divided. Some were left as a guard in the rear, but the greater number passed off for the assault of the house. Of these, fifteen, led on by the libertine and cruel S' Lhambi, having climbed the wall by the aid of a vine, were immediately in the balcony.



All that followed was instantaneous and fatal as the smiting thunder-flash !—The chamber was forced, successive screams sinking into faintness came mingled with peals of savage laughter, and then were heard groans, which the listeners knew to be those of Henrik.

As yet the boisterous mirth in the rooms below had prevented the alarm from spreading ; but, as if those moans of agony had been the preconcerted signal for a general onset, the relentless gang now poured in at every opening. Defence was out of the question ; the men, menials and all, were lost either in the stupor, or maddening excitement of wine and wassail, and in less than two minutes not a single male survived. The females were reserved, but not in mercy, for their death was near, but for enormities, such as demons might tremble even to name.

The mingled screams, groans, and yells, arising as murder and violence reached their consummation, were worthy of the damned ;



but this clamour, terrific as it was, by occupying the attention of the guard without, afforded time for the retreat of the Boors.

In about an hour the whole building was seen wrapt in a sheet of flame: and within a short period, the savages having retired from the neighbourhood, some curious Boors rode over to visit the scene of the late outrage. They found the greater part of the building destroyed, and from the number of burnt human bones, mixed with fragments of female ornaments remaining in one of the rooms, it was evident that the sated wretches had forced the objects of their lust into that fiery den to die.

It strangely happened that the bridal chamber itself remained unconsumed, and most of the party considered this so ominous that they refused to enter it. One, however, at last ventured within the half-closed door, when the floor, which had been scorched to blackness, but not burnt through, suddenly gave

way, and he received a severe injury from the fall.

That some dreadful spectacle of unnatural horror had been seen within, was gathered from the incoherent expressions uttered by the wounded man at the time, but as an inflammation of the brain, arising from the accident, soon afterwards proved fatal, no detailed particulars were ever learnt.

The Boors of Southern Africa are as superstitious as they are fanatical, and the house of 'the judgment-stricken Henrik Van Sluysken,' with the adjacent 'gardens of vanity,' were, by popular consent, entirely relinquished to the Hyæna and the Serpent, as a spot 'accursed, and far too dangerous for human foot to tread.'

It was to this 'Golgotha' of the wilderness that Drakenstein, after the dangerous expedient of breaking faith with Makanna, had removed Miss Falkland. Not that the predilections of the wary Dutchman for this fearful locality were greater than those of his

countrymen, but that he felt himself in a strait that might have driven him to a still greater extremity.

His well acted grief for the pretended death of Miss Falkland, just at the moment as he said of "her providential rescue by his instrumentality from those 'Canaanites of the Desert,' the Amakossæ," was so thoroughly believed by the credulous Lieutenant Pearlham, on whom he had also imposed with a false account of Vernon's death, that the old hypocrite, after being well received at the English camp, was at last dismissed with valuable presents. This fictitious drowning affair was thus far the most convenient device that could have been used, as it had relieved him from an enemy, against whose vigilance he could not in any other way have contended, but at the same time it had left him exposed to imminent danger from the natives. To the Amakossæ the falsehood of his statement was too well known for him to hope to profit by it if he remained within their reach; to pass

beyond it was to enter the colony, and there the discovery of his secret would have been still more fatal.

Under these circumstances the interdicted, and abhorred 'garden of vanity,' with its fire-scathed ruin, seemed, in point of safety, the most judicious place of concealment that could have been chosen. Standing within a well-peopled neighbourhood of the colony (for there were farms within six or seven miles), it was as sufficiently separated from the Natives, as it was safe from the intrusion of the Boors.

Here the care of Miss Falkland and her attendant Mage had been confided to slaves sufficiently overawed by their severe master to fulfil his slightest bidding without question or remorse, and the only difficulty was for Drakenstein, or his son Cootje, to pass and repass in their journeys to the 'Zee-koe-Gatten' without observation. The avocations of an extensive cattle-dealer had, for many years, given old Hugo an ostensible reason for

wandering about the colony, while his accounts for gunpowder, and other contraband articles, with Van Riesbeck, bore ample evidence that the hidden purpose was of far greater importance than the visible object. On the present occasion the same subterfuge was equally effective; and the out-goings, and in-comings of Hugo Drakenstein were as little heeded as usual.

In the mean time, except the intolerable vexation of her forced seclusion, and the anxiety it naturally induced, Bertha had little to complain of. Her wishes in every practicable point were evidently studied, and so far was this care extended by Drakenstein, that he had restrained the too frequent visits of Cootje in deference to her feelings. Notwithstanding this seeming moderation, the views of Hugo were unchanged. The union of Bertha with his son was become more necessary than ever to his ambition, and dearer to his heart; while it was actually essential to his safety.

Perhaps the utter selfishness of his conduct never appeared before him in the naked simplicity of its deformity. The cruelty inflicted was indeed too clear to be totally disregarded, but a thousand specious apologies weakened, though they could not extinguish the upbraidings of conscience. A proud and heartless fanaticism whispered, that any transient suffering, or even lasting worldly mortification was of little moment, so that she were thus redeemed from the yawning gulf of perdition, against which it impiously taught that moral excellence was no preservation, and which its presumption doomed to all, except the besotted votaries of its narrow creed.

It boots not to follow such a mind, through all the false mediums of prejudice and arrogance, that distorted its very vices into self-conceited counterfeits of virtue! the world is overgorged with such sickening realities, and Drakenstein had qualities of a more direct and active nature. A deep, deliberate, over-reaching cunning, that could feed on expect-



tation till time and opportunity had effected half its purpose.

This was the sheet anchor of his hope in respect to Bertha. As the noble Falcon, when mewed up in silence and in darkness;—worn out with one unvaried dreary sameness, at length grows glad to see the tyrant that subdues her;—so did he flatter himself with the hope that time,—the youthful thirst for change, and that deep yearning of the heart that makes us long for sympathetic kindness, though it were but in the patient glances of a dog, affectionate if dumb!—that these would tranquillize the wilder beatings of her heart, and mould her to his purpose.

With such cold calculations, were strangely mingled feelings of a warmer and more amiable character. The polished manners and simple sincerity of Bertha had awakened the respect and esteem of Drakenstein, before his present project was entertained, and the hope of raising the character of his house, by the marriage of his only son with the wealthy and accom-



plished English heiress, whom he could himself love proudly as a daughter, was after all his prevailing motive.

From these feelings, the captivity of Bertha had been hitherto attended with every indulgence that a delicate sense of her merit could suggest; and no idea of extorting a forced accedance was contemplated by Drakenstein, until an unforeseen accident seemed to render such desperate means the only alternative his interest would admit of.

The 'gardens of vanity,' as the fanatical Boors had nick-named the one attached to the homestead of the unfortunate Henrik for many years, had been the principal object of his care, and with a refined taste in matters of the sort, he had soon rendered them the little paradise he wished. Among other ornaments, the garden contained a snug pavilion, fantastically built with bamboos, and thatched with palm leaves, while the whole garden was rendered secure from the intrusion of either man or beast, by a lofty impervious hedge of

kaffer-thorn, the only entrance being by a porch-way through the house itself.

The pavilion had been made duly convenient for the residence of Miss Falkland, and, as escape from the garden without assistance, was to a female impossible, the care of guarding the place of her confinement was easily discharged; and old Gaspal, the Hottentot huntsman, had been installed in this office, with five Madagascarene slaves to execute his orders. The superstitious dread of the Boors, indeed, rendered the place more secure from any visit on their part, than even a cordon of troops had it been available. Still the visits of the watchful Hugo were frequent, and always unexpected! Sometimes he was attended by his son, but more frequently he came alone, as he did not consider the spirit of his prisoner as yet sufficiently tamed, to render her, from a sense of prudence, or the hope of liberty, even lenient to those tender pleadings, which he

deemed that time and artifice would render at last effective.

On such occasions, Drakenstein had a tent pitched for his residence, in a space outside the house; for his repugnance to the 'doomed chamber,' was quite as great as that of others, and so constantly was the feeling on his mind, that, even by daylight, in visiting the pavilion, he had never passed the open porch of the house that formed the entrance to the garden, without an emotion that chilled the very marrow in his bones.

It was at one of these times, that Hugo, having arrived just after night-fall, (his usual season, as it prevented observation,) had discussed his supper with the silent application of a man who knows that the body must be fed in proportion to past exertion, or the physical equipoise will be lost, on which even mental energy depends. Yes, Hugo had enjoyed full half-an-hour's comfort,—for just that time had been spent in eating;

an avocation, during which (often fortunately for himself,) all ideas of the outward world were absorbed in a laudable attention to the actual sensations attending the several acts of mastication, tasting, and swallowing. But as all sublunary blessings pass away, this holiday of the mind was over, and Hugo awoke to all those cold, creeping, fidgetty fantasies, that ever haunted him when in the vicinity of the garden of vanity.

He tried to smoke, but the pipe would not draw;—it was a good one, too, but a certain indescribable ‘deadness in the air’ kept it from burning:—at least, so thought Hugo. He took out his tobacco-stopper, a whimsical bit of carved silver, representing two birds, one of them a cock; and bought in what he called “the days of his carnality after the fashion of the world,” and retained, in the mere indolence of habit, when something, as he thought, not altogether seemly in the device, put him so irresistibly in mind

of the last moments of the 'sin-stricken Henrik,' that, notwithstanding some effort at self-control, he turned his eyes, with a sort of fascination, full on the object he had always avoided, except by daylight,—“the doomed chamber of the bridal.”

Independently of its tragical associations, the scene had much to impress the mind with melancholy. The heavens were cloudless, and the absence of the moon was little heeded in the serene glory of the stars, gleaming through an atmosphere so clear as to give the idea of an entire void, extending to the intense blueness of the etherial vault beyond. More solemn from the silence, in lonely desolation, the ruin appeared beneath the shade of an indistinct mass of heavy foliage; and though the whole was enveloped in gloom, yet, as some parts retained the original hue of the sand-stone with which it was built, while others were stained to a sooty blackness by the conflagration, there

was an air of picturesque variety, that startled from its oddness. On one side, the naked half-burnt timbers of the roof still hung over in fearful balance; while a yawning crack of the entire wall allowed a scattered ray of star-light to pierce the mysteries of its dark foundation. Choice creeping plants had originally been trained over the part which had so strangely remained unconsumed. These were of course all dead; and now, instead of the cheerful green, flowery wreaths, and breathing fragrance, with which they had once enshrined the balconies of that fatal chamber, their rotting convoluted branches, and flabby leaves, hanging around in black and tangled masses, gave the idea of coils of serpents mingled with the folded wings of slumbering bats. The glass of one of the windows shone, too, with a dull unnatural leaden lustre; but that of the other was entirely shattered, doubtless by the bride, in the agony of her despair, when striving



vainly to escape, as portions of torn white linen were still depending from its jagged, and gleaming fragments.

“Methinks,”—whispered Drakenstein involuntary to himself, and shuddering deeply, “from that bed of festering corruption a voice might call aloud—‘Hugo!—Hugo!—thou hast made a spoil of my substance, and yet the uncoffined bones of Henrik are left to mildew in the fogs of midnight, and to blacken in the sun!’—Faith, the thought is as a millstone about my neck, and the carcass of the sinner shall be earth’d, though the job should cost the lives of half-a-dozen slaves!—Hark’ee, Gaspal!”

The grim old Huntsman was on his knees, broiling his supper, but with such a “Meester” a single word was more than enough; and leaving a prime steak to burn upon the embers, he started up to obey the mandate.

“Gaspal, see in the morning that two



of the slaves clamber in at that window;—let them bring out what they may find, and bury it beyond the pool.”

The Hottentot shook his head, but ventured no answer.

“Did the hound hear?”—shouted Drakenstein.

“Him hear berry well, Massa; but him tink dat nebber do!—Von day de ug’ee Vulture come;—him push naked red skinny neck in dat windee; den him mak’ee big scream, an’ fly-’way!—Him no lik’ee vot him see! Dis tam strange place!—Me no lik’ee vot me see!”

“See!”—cried Hugo, unconsciously repeating the word, as his mantling wrath evaporated in feelings of apprehension,—“Speak, man!—What mean ye?”

“Me keep guard vid de loaded gun;—me shoot any live ting,—man, beast, all same, you order. Well, me walk dis way, dat way, ebery way; all hot sun—tamnation

hot ! so hot me turn ; den me see black shadow o' de man !—but no man !—me beat de bushee, an poke ebery ting !—all noting.”

“ Duyvils an' Thunder !” shouted Drakenstein, quite cured of his fear by an alarm he could understand,—“ there's something here !—this was the shadow of a substance ! Should the apparition of Meester Henrik Van Sluysken come, as doubtless he cannot rest without a grave !—the Lord forbid that a living finger should wag in the way of violence, for the spirits of unburied men are strong in the power of the Fiend !—But for a shadow by daylight !—Zounds and fury !”

“ Hush !”—said one, whose approaching steps had past unheeded—“ you forget that the Lady may be affrighted from her sleep, and faith, she'll have enough on't yet.”

“ What Cootje, lad, are ye from Cape Town so soon !—and what brings ye here without the word ?”

“Why, I should have come by the wind if it had not been for the water!” answered the young royster, willing to smooth down the eager temper of his Father by a little verbal delay.

“Yes, they were coaxing me for what they called ‘a pleasant run down the coast,’ in one of the Duyvil’s own pilot boats, a Flying-Proa:—But, no, no, the sea’s apt to run too *hard*, to leave one breath for the race!”

“Well, Cootje,”—said his Father gravely, —“ye did best not to venture on the great deep without the call o’ lawful business. Besides, ye’ll have a special spell on the blue-water, when you’re bound with your winsome bride for Rotterdam. Don’t speak a word, lad, I’ve settled every thing:—You and the lady shall be made man and wife, handy on the time; I’ll find a thoughtful minister that, for the sake of her soul, and a double fee, shall overlook just the unlucky trifle, (if so it be)

of her unwilling consent. Witnesses and all the rest shall be as regular as the law can desire. The lady's fortune, and my own, will keep us like princes in 'the mother land,' and, 'faith, the colony is to us even now as a cause of backsliding, a pitfall, and a snare. Time shall make it more easy with Miss Falkland, and you'll have enough to woo her twice over!—three months, you know, must pass before the ship takes in her cargo at the Cape,—”

“Not three days! perhaps not as many hours!—There's a plaguy stir with the talk of a new war, and the Captain says he'll slip off in ballast, while he may.”

“But the 'deposit money!'”—said Hugo, eagerly,—“The deposit money on the voyage;—surely, lad, you've recovered that?”

“Not a stiver:—You know there was not a word as to time in the bond, and as for law, were the matter not a secret, as it must be, the chance were no better. The

Captain calls it 'being taken all aback' himself, and is ready on the pinch to perform his part of the contract, by sending this same Flying-Proa to take us off to the ship, which, he promises, shall lie-to in the offing for the purpose. I told him the thing was a folly without more time, but not a word would the fellow hear!—He'll fulfil his stipulation to the letter, and pocket the deposit as a jest."

"What other news?"—said Drakenstein, in a faint but hurried tone,—“What other news? Let me hear it all.”

“For the matter of that, ‘short and sweet’ is the motto,”—replied Cootje, with careless temerity,—“Our flam o’ the girl’s death has past for gospel with them all. The weasel-faced old prig, her Father, looking glum as a mountain cat with pared claws, walks about every day with crape on his arm. The Goshawk is ordered home, and Captain Daker and he have taken berths for the voyage, so that we shall be quit o’ them. Of the Ama-

kossæ there's little known to any certainty;—the gathering at the Karroo had been heard of;—but they've a strange story—that Makanna has secretly left his followers, which, if true, is like the “storm's eye” in the desert, a little thing now, and often little heeded, but one that, hereafter, may scatter the hopes of the Colony! Van Riesbeck has just new christened his Hostelry, and calls it “The Kettle-drum,” in honour of his own campaigning. The first half of the word was a lucky hit, but as for the second, 'tis as empty of meaning as the bald-pated sinner has long been of honesty.”

“Who talks of sin?”—cried Drakenstein, who, till now, lost in a gloomy reverie, had heard but little of Cootje's flippant harangue, —“Who talks of sin!—Let the curse fall on the *tempter*, not on the tempted! Were it not even better that the maiden be cut off, than that the ‘cause’ should suffer by the scandal of a lie proven on the righteous?—



But as yet the better chance remaineth—would I not love her as a daughter, then shall she not be overruled as a child!—Even so. Cootje, you shall to horse again, and fetch me the minister I wot of. Gaspal shall be your guide, by to-morrow's night-fall the pastor must be here; in the mean time, I will enforce the matter to Miss Falkland,—she shall, she must, consent, or yield—either will prove the same. She shall on board, your wife!—then let her chide the billows as they foam, I care not; my destiny is linked with hers, and let her break the fetter if she can! Boy, be thou obedient; women may chide, but 'tis not in their nature to abhor the young and bold:—Go to,—tears and blushes in a bride are lovely as dew drops on the rose. To horse!—The Sea-Captain shall find me as ready as himself; and my letters shall ensure you a home at Rotterdam, until the rest of us can follow.”

“Hist!”—said Cootje, looking intently



towards the ruin,—“ Did not something gleam faintly from within, or was it but the lightning in the distance.”

“ I see no more than usual,”—said his Father, calmly.

“ Again, what’s that, it sounded from the chamber of the bridal !”

Drakenstein, at the moment, shrunk back aghast, but immediately afterwards answered, with even more firmness than before,—“ I noted it well, but it was nothing :—a sound of this world ; I heard it jar on the floor ; mayhap a fragment of one of the corpses, parted from very rottenness. The place is awful, and accursed ; and we’ll be quits the sooner :—Come, come, to horse !”

## CHAPTER IX.

“Come what may,  
Time, and the hour, run through the roughest day!”

MACBETH.

IN the contrast exhibited between man in the savage, and civilized condition, perhaps nothing is more remarkable than the facility with which the former traverses the wilderness, or the forest, no matter how extensive, to the spot of his desires.

The distance is so vast, in some of these journeys ; the interminable intermingling avenues of solemn shade, beneath an undistinguished ocean of green leaves, so confounding to our senses, in the forest ; and the trackless

sameness of the Desert, so overawing in its immensity, that we are ready to conclude, that the power in question must depend on a peculiar instinct given expressly for the purpose.

The aspect of the Savage, when met on such occasions, has naturally strengthened this illusion. The graceful buoyancy of his active half naked figure, seen by momentary snatches, as he rapidly advances through the murky shades, and thronged tree-boles of the forest. His dusky countenance, pressing eagerly forward, without a moment's turning to the right or left, although the fiery glance of his restless rolling eyes, continually in motion, leave not a single nook unsearched ! The deep and regular drawings of his breath, and the keen sniftings of his extended nostrils, all these combined, give us the idea, that he is conversant with some sensations beyond ourselves.

Such is not the fact ; and yet, by long habit, strict observation, and deep research,

he sees and knows far more than we could recognise in such situations. The different thickness and smoothness of the bark, on the opposite sides of the trees, the prevailing bend of their branches, and the facing of their leaves, not only indicate the north and south, but the expansion of the mosses, and flowery weeds scattered around, are sufficient to show the period of the day, and changes of the weather; while the prevalence of certain insects, birds, and animals, evince the proximity, or remoteness, of the open country, or of the ocean. Sounds, to us indistinct, give a timely warning against the approach of danger; and marks, that we should totally disregard, betray at once the nature of the game that may be captured, or the ravening beast to be avoided.

In Southern Africa, the observations on the foot-print, or "spoor," are so universally important in hunting, and in war, in the pursuit of an enemy, or the search of a friend,

for the purpose of recovering a stolen ox, or of catching a run-away slave, that, by constant practice, the faculty may be said to have reached absolute perfection. The native herdsmen, and shepherds, not only have distinct names for each of their numerous cattle, and distinguish the sheep by a variety of features, which we should overlook, but, by a strict observance of the almost insensible differences in the shape of the hoof, or step, of any particular animal, they will detect its presence, if driven off, and mingled with another herd, in a manner almost beyond belief.

The cruel exigencies to which the proscribed and dwarfish Bosjesmans are exposed, has rendered them singularly acute in all such particulars; and Laroon had more than one reason to be satisfied with the dexterity and success of Javan, in hunting out the traces of Drakenstein and his party, through a desolate range of country, until the black ruins of Henrik's farm arose before them. The first examination of the spot convinced the Creole,

that it contained the object of his search, and it was well that the obligation of his oath prevented those rash attempts for the liberation of Bertha, which his love and fiery temper might have prompted.

As the vigilant patrol kept up by Gaspal and his subordinates interdicted any approach to the domain by daylight, Laroon then retired to the concealment of jungle, or spent the time in hunting. But when the hour of sunset called the slaves to their evening repast, and as the ruin darkened amid the fast prevailing glooms of night, and they seemed to consider the place sufficiently guarded by the horrors of its associations, then he ventured on a nearer visit. At such times the tantalizing vexation of being debarred from any direct attempt was somewhat alleviated by the certainty gained as to the respectful attention extended to the prisoner, a fact for which the directions given by Drakenstein, which he frequently overheard, were sufficient vouchers.

These nightly approaches had also their



use, as they rendered him familiar with the ground, and the facility for escape it would present when the arrival of Makanna might justify the effort he had already resolved on making.

These days of unwilling absence and nocturnal vigils of defeated hope had been extended to a period of painful length, when the sudden arrival of Cootje, and the proposition for a forced marriage, the whole of which was overheard by Laroon, had nearly driven the latter frantic. A discovery at this moment would not only have cost him his life, but it would have left her he loved without even a chance of protection; and yet so strong was the impulse to make some effort in her service, that, regardless of the beseeching signs of Javan, he had crept under cover of the neglected shrubs and rank guinea-grass, surrounding its foundations into the house itself, and thus occasioned the alarm which had thrown Cootje into so much agitation. Here a pause



for consideration occurred, and Laroon fortunately remembered that the whole enterprise might be defeated, at least that the removal of the intended bride might be rendered physically impossible by an enterprise, which, as a sailor, he knew it would be easy to accomplish: the burning, or scutling of the Flying-Proa on her making land. This project rendered a retreat from the building he had entered with so much hazard indispensable; and the stir occasioned by the departure of Cootje gave a fortunate opportunity for the purpose.

The whole of the next day was spent by Laroon under a burning excitement bordering on delirium. Regardless of the reptiles which had made its dark recesses their favourite resort, he had posted himself among the cavernous fragments of a perishing sand-stone rock, itself buried beneath gigantic coils of creeping plants, and half surrounded with stagnant water, overgrown by lotuses and

rushes. At the foot of these rocks ran the track by which young Drakenstein would return in the evening with the arch-hypocrite who was to give the colour of a religious sanction to the atrocity about to be accomplished, while the ' multitudinous ocean ' heaved darkly in the distance.

As the day drew towards its meridian, the waves first sunk into a ripple, and then ceasing altogether, as if the fervent heat had exhausted the elasticity of the air, and left no freshness in the water, the sea became fierce and dazzling in its brightness as a sheet of molten brass ! The broad pendulous leaves of the wild melon collapsed from very faintness ; a dry white crumbling crust gathered on the edges of the pools around the foot of the mouldering rock, while on the dark and glassy surface of the stagnant water, the floating foliage of the lotus turned of a languid sickly yellow, scorched with the fiery glow.

Above the rocks themselves, the gorgeous crimson flowers of the trailing cactus, that in the morning, crisp in maiden beauty, were fit to deck the bowers of paradise—now with blackened edges, hung clammy and disgusting, baked in their own exuding juices. The very insect race, that so often gambol into death, as if it were a pastime, had all retired, and left the sultry air without a sound. The nimble tree-lizards with gem-bright eyes, semi-pellucid bodies, and tints rich with a changing splendour of vivid green, violet, and golden hue, lay panting in the shade between the deeper fissures of the rocks; and ever and anon, the glistening serpent wriggling slowly from his slimy hole, shrunk from the glancing sun-beams, as if their radiance were the living flame.

The only creatures that seemed exempt from this fiery visitation of the noon-tide hour, were those that had their dwelling in the water; and these, as its milky warmth gave them increased vivacity, were full of motion.

Gleaming with dazzling flashes of coloured light, the fishes now floated for a moment on the surface, or darting out of sight, lay hid beneath the filmy collections of aquatic weed that hung cloud-like in the mid water.

These objects were innocent as beautiful; but the attention of Laroon was more devoted to three tyrant Alligators, that apparently considered both the lagoon and its sportive inhabitants, as their own exclusive property. Two of these scaly gentlemen, perhaps in a hungry mood, kept swimming from shore to shore, with the avidity of privateers cruising on a new station, but the third, and largest, lay motionless beneath the shade of an overhanging shelf of rock. Quiet as he was, there was much of the dark and dangerous in the aspect of this reptile, and his crafty deep seated eye raised just to a level with the surface, and glancing with a momentary light, had something in its fierce intelligence, that put the Creole irresistibly in mind of Makanna's doubtful look when speaking of the oath.

Just at this moment, as if in mere wantonness, a rosy tinted trout shot into the centre, and there lay basking. It was but the luxury of a moment,—a sudden concussion ruffled the lagoon; the two smaller Alligators vanished, and then rising, like a whirling shadow, struggled for their prey. The combat was but of short duration, for the third and larger reptile, lashing his tail with violence, lifted his arm-like limbs and silvery breast upward in the air, and bounding forward fell immediately above them.

A burst of foam covered all from the eye, but soon the blood bubbling up, gathered like a crimson cloud in the midst of the water, and as it subsided, the lord of the conquest appeared lying as motionless as ever, and alone.

The afternoon was more pleasant, as a faint breeze came sighing from the sea, and by the evening freshened to a gale. Though humid from the laving waters, yet still its coolness brought no relief to the unappeased anxieties that burnt in the vitals of the Creole.

It might accord with the mysterious habits of Makanna, for him to delay his coming until the very crisis of the intended mischief;—but then how easily might any intervening accident defeat his intentions, even if they were good! Thoughts such as these, with a vague shadowy apprehension of the stern perseverance of Drakenstein, and the abhorred consummation of his wishes in the sequel, presented themselves in varied forms to the imagination of the Creole, and each more gloomy than the past.

The day wore swiftly away; and at length both sky and sea were shrouded in one general tint of gray under the shadow of the evening, without a single fresh object having for a moment broken the dusky arch of the offing. It was the time for the return of Cootje; and having torn away some intervening leaves that hung before the over-jutting buttress of rock that concealed him, Laroon kept his eyes fixed on the tract lead-



ing from the waste, with a restless impatience. This feeling was extended to a painful intensity, when the as yet diminutive figures of the expected horsemen were seen in a valley to the right.

A sensation of disgust, even amounting to hatred, chilled the bosom of Paul; and while thus absorbed, and without any definite idea in the act itself, he laid down his loaded rifle straight before him on the moss-grown shelf of rock on which he had been previously leaning.

The advancing group came nearer, and soon the wild snorting Hottentot song of Gaspal, with its low guttural burden, struck distinctly on the ear. Presently it ceased, and then the high-toned dogmatical emphasis of old Hugo's favorite 'Antinomian divine' was heard, 'sanctifying,' as he termed it, the barrenness of the way with edifying talk.

As they drew still nearer, the swarthy



face and tall bony form of the *spiritual* expounder of 'the incomprehensible innocence of sin under the influence of grace,' for such was his theme, came fully into view. There was something of a lambent leer in the corner of his half-closed eye, as it held visual communion with the ascending angle of his bloated nose, promising more sympathy with the frailties of 'sinful flesh,' than he would have avowed; but the protruding chin, square pursed up mouth, with its ever-ready smile of conciliating cunning, gave a better idea of the harsh relentless selfishness and ignorant pride of the owner. His very mode of riding, too, was a sample of his want of feeling and base hardihood of mind, for at the monotonous close of every sentence of his wordy harangue, the unfortunate beast beneath him received a staggering check with the bridle, and a gall with the deep-rowelled spurs, as if the animal had wilfully stumbled.

Wearied and regardless of his ghostly

companion, Cootje contrived to ride somewhat in the rear; and perhaps the young royster had never appeared more handsome than at that moment. The faint flash of the dying light (for a gleam from the departed sun then lingered on the edge of the horizon) gave a softened expression to his large features, beaming with the ruddy glow of health; and to the 'voluptuous power,' if the term may be allowed, of his full-toned muscular figure, that brought the words of Hugo—"women may chide, but 'tis not in their nature to abhor the young and daring," to the brain of Laroon with a maddening influence.

The action is not to be defended. In one view it was dastardly and cruel. Still the temptation was strong; the impulse almost irresistible; for the rifle ready cocked lay on a fair level with its muzzle pointed full on the rival bridegroom, as he chanced to loiter still more in passing the spot.

The shoulder of Laroon pressed up instinctively to the butt—his finger was on the trigger—

“And the death-shot was fired?”—No! at that instant a rustling in the leaves was heard; in the next, a cold and silvery hand, as with the grasp of an iron gauntlet, clutching upon the lock, suspended the hammer in its fall—a fiery spirit-searching glance, looked upward in the pale countenance of Laroon, and the deep mellow voice of Makanna whispered—

“Not so—‘a warrior kills not as the adder stings, unseen in safety!’”

The deadly rifle was laid aside, the offending party out of sight; and the really warm-hearted Creole, thanking his dusky ally most cordially for having saved him from the commission of an act repugnant to his better feelings, when the latter interrupted him by remarking—

“The matter had been indeed as much a

folly as a crime; for were there need,—a single word—a look from me, should suffice to send the frank, but thoughtless boy—yes, even to-night! with the full harvest of its joy unreaped!—farther than stands yon dim and dusky mountain!

“But I have secret purposes to be fulfilled, that, notwithstanding his late treachery, will not permit that Drakenstein should have the shadow of offence!

“The stunning blow of his defeat shall fall from an invisible hand!—The prize he holds, even while he feels secure, shall pass from his grasp, as easily as water through the sand!

“Yet we but dally!—the bridal lamps are lit, and gleam too brightly on the tears of Bertha:—still pause; I would converse in private with the boy, with Javan.”

The fearful allusion to Miss Falkland had again let loose the demons of impatience in the bosom of Laroon, yet the overawing influ-

ence of Makanna kept him silent; and poring on the earth in sorrowful endurance, he bore with due fortitude the long delay which the parley with Javan occasioned.

“Come!”—cried the Chieftain—“we will be swift and certain!—

“Ha! that phosphoric light, sparkling along the bosom of the ocean!—that speck of white, as ’twere a sea-mew’s wing.—’Tis she, our ark of hope! how gallantly she swings upon the waves, and runs upon the wind, as if she knew her destiny, and pressed to meet it!”

“Would she were sunk deeper than lead hath ever sounded!—Torn by the whirlwind!—blasted by the lightning!—

“But let her come, as you have said, ‘to meet her destiny;’—and she shall find it, that is, if her hull may be scuttled by an ax, —or the light cotton duck she wears hath nature in’t to burn.”

“Rashness is an evil guide for those that

wander on the precipice of danger!"—rejoined the Chieftain.—“ But come; the bat is hovering round already, and the swift fire-flies glance like glowing sparks amid the darkness. We must be gone !”

So saying, Makanna passed rapidly in the direction of the coast, and on the way Laroon received such directions as the former deemed necessary, though by no means such as were satisfactory, or sufficiently explanatory of the future.

As if previously aware of the superstitious fears of Drakenstein, the first object assigned to Laroon was for him again to enter the ruin, and by sounds and lights, to credulous eyes apparently supernatural, to throw the Dutchman and his followers into alarm. This explained, and being so far relieved from his oath, the next object was, for him to venture on a visit to the pavilion, for the purpose of inducing Bertha to place herself under the care of Makanna, who having opened a breach



in the barrier of the garden, would with Javan meet him at that spot. Laroon was then to return to the ruin, for the purpose of keeping the Dutchman in check, while the Chieftain might conduct Miss Falkland to the Flying-Proa, in which, on being joined by the Creole, he would put to sea, and thus place the fair object of their anxiety even beyond the danger of pursuit.

This conversation was hardly finished, when a rocket, thrown up by Drakenstein as a signal to the crew of the Proa, proved how zealously he was bent on the completion of the enterprise. At this fresh alarm to his fears, the ardent nature of the Creole was all on fire, and he hurried away to post himself in the ruin.

On approaching the house, he perceived that the Dutchman and his '*Reverend*' guest were already at supper. Four or five flasks of wine were placed on the end of a cask that served as a table, and a side of venison, (from



which slices were cut as wanted,) was roasting at a huge charcoal fire, the only sort of fuel, by the by, that they ventured to use, as the appearance of smoke would have been noticed by the neighbouring Boors.

As Laroon drew nearer, under cover of the thick matted, and neglected foliage, he saw with alarm, that Drakenstein had taken measures which would increase the hazard of his project, if they did not defeat it. The open porch of the house, before dark and easy of access, was, as it formed the communication through which Cootje was to enter the bower of his bride, now guarded by a slave, armed, and carrying a torch. It was evident, too, that the whole party had indulged freely in wine, doubtless, as a means of fortifying their nerves against those uncomfortable fears, which the proximity of the 'doomed chamber,' with its horrible adjuncts, the unburied corpses, were likely to awaken.

Even the saturnine countenance of Drakenstein was flushed with a purple tinge, but not alone from the excitement of wine, for there dwelt a sullen thoughtfulness of expression, with a restless impatience in the eyes, that betrayed the workings of an uneasy mind, too plainly to be mistaken. His thoughts were then busied with the solemn and piteous denunciations of Bertha, against the impious ceremony he had forced upon her, and during which, he had savagely constrained her presence, by holding her hands with a gripe of iron; her distressed look, the agonized tone of her voice, all arose upon his recollection, and he half-relented of his purpose.

The ecclesiastical accomplice in this nefarious deed was too far engrossed in the physical enjoyments of the moment, to think of aught beyond the selection of tit-bits of venison, and the propriety of quaffing deeply of the last opened flask before the aroma of

the wine had time to exhale. In the meanwhile, Cootje, having drank more deeply than the rest, and whose better feelings had been blunted by the artful insinuation of a want of courage in his previous unwillingness, was now on the verge of intoxication, and with his youthful fancy heated by visions of surpassing beauty, ripe for the mischief of the hour.

Laroon saw the necessity of promptitude, and crept, silently as a serpent through a leafy labyrinth, to the edge of the moat in front of the ruin. The hazard was now imminent, as the sentinel at each turn stepped out on the bridge before the porch, where every object in the moat was visible at a glance. There was, besides, the danger of slipping into the water, but no other expedient remained, and Paul boldly descended the bank; but he had hardly done so, when the slave came again upon the bridge; fortunately, the fellow's eyes were enviously cast upon

his feasting comrades, and he resumed his beat. Passing on, Laroon got unperceived as far as the side of the bridge, which promised some shelter, as its ledge was a few inches above his head.

The sentinel reappeared, his torch required trimming, and as he began to beat off the core against the wall, the sparks fell in a luminous shower into the moat:—a moment had now been fatal; the Creole felt it, and with a sudden effort lifting the feet of the slave from under him, he canted him over headlong into the moat. The porch, now dark and unguarded, was easily gained; and in the next instant Laroon had passed it, and made fast the door behind him at the garden side.

The wild cries of the slaves without, and then the total silence that followed, told how well the expedient had answered; and desirous to avail himself of this interval of terror, with a beating heart he hurried forward. The winding trellised walks of the garden were

redolent with fruit and flowers. A luscious fainty sweetness hung in the air; and where patches of the sky appeared through the interwoven branches, they were indeed "inlaid with patterns of bright gold." Presently a hollow glade of verdant turf, embowered on every side with masses of luxuriant foliage, and descending gently to a bright expanse of water, reflecting in its translucent depths the azure vault above, opened on the view.

Advancing forward, the pavilion itself, built on the border of the lake, beneath two drooping willows of magnificent growth, became visible; a faint light shone from one of its narrow latticed windows, and a female weeping bitterly, whom Laroon immediately recognised to be Mage, was reclining disconsolately on a flight of steps descending from the building to the water.

A horrible suspicion relative to Bertha crossed the mind of her lover, and anxious to learn the worst, he rushed precipitately for-

ward. Alarmed at the sound, and having started from her seat, the weeping Mage, with her usual timidity, was about to scream, when the sight of the Amakossæ costume in some measure tranquillized her fears, and she began to claim protection by every pathetic gesture she could devise.

“For the love of Heaven! say, does she live?”—But no, the extremity of her distraction gave her no time to pause—“Oh God!—show me the spot—oh, speak!”

Poor Mage was in fact almost without the power:—the joy,—the astonishment,—and, more than all, the ‘fear,’ of hearing the voice of Laroon, from the lips of a half naked warrior of Amakossena had utterly confused her!—Fortunately the Creole, suspecting the cause of her suspense, explained the nature of this disguise.

“Dear me!”—exclaimed the fearful little girl, half hysterical with joy—“Dear me!—it must be so, and you are sent to save us!—



My lady thought that you were dead ;—for she was sure, she said, that you would never thus have left her.”

The words, simple as they were, had conveyed to Laroon intelligence that re-strung his heart to ecstasy; for it was evident, not only that Bertha lived, but that his love might be responded: and again he inquired for her lady.

“ Oh ! ”—cried the trembling Mage, with renewed emotion—“ the wretches have fastened her in the pavilion; they knew that I would die to save her, and so they dragged me from her.” And then dropping her voice—“ Those people of the Zee-koe-Gatten are desperately wicked ;—they have been forcing her into some sort of marriage, and I heard them whisper to each other—that I might be too far a witness !—and should be kept away—

“ Oh God ! I hear a voice even now !—save her !—Oh save her ! ”

Paul needed not this adjuration; he had



cleared the steps at a leap!—and dashing his shoulder against the doors, they broke from their hinges, and fell before him. He paused; for, at the extremity of a dimly lighted chamber, he beheld his Bertha, so wildly beautiful in the agony of her dread, that he feared her dissolution would ensue;—yet there was no trace of mental weakness in her aspect, but rather the frozen determination of despair, though mixed with a feminine consciousness and delicacy which cannot be described, but was most touching in its piteous destitution, as with death-like grasp she crushed the foldings of a loose muslin dress upon her bosom.

“My dearest!—my own!—my Bertha!—Remember the Ganges and Laroon!” said the Creole, half stifled with emotion, and hoping to recall her attention.

“Yes!” cried Mage, whose arms were in a moment locked around the waist of her lady, —“It is the dear, brave Captain himself, and now they never can prevail!”

A shudder came over Bertha, darkening her countenance with a momentary shadow, as it were from a passing cloud; she strove, but could not speak, and showering tears relieved her heart from bursting.

She raised herself from the supporting arms of her lover with the entrancing smiles and blushes of a maid, rapt in the first throbbing silent confusion of self-betrayed affection.

"Thank God!"—she whispered,—“that I am spared the sin, which seemed my only passport from a greater evil.—You remember the gift of my dear Father, when he left me in the Ganges?—I had it ready for the worst.”

So saying she unclasped her hand, in which lay one of those small stilettos, ornamented with gems, and worn by the Persian Sultanas, as an insignia of their rank.

“Yes,”—she rejoined, as sheathing the dangerous but fairy weapon, she restored it

with a smile to its former lodgement in her bosom,—“ I shall love it for the future as ‘ a ready friend in the hour of need,’ but I have found a better!”—and her hand fell with a cordial pressure into that of Laroon.

“ Oh, Madam, let us escape while yet we may!”—exclaimed Mage, with returning alarm.

In an instant they were descending the steps, the hand of Bertha still pressed in that of her lover, as she was leaning fondly on the other arm half clasped around her bosom, when shrinking suddenly, she exclaimed:—

“ I was too much in Heaven, I understand it now;—it was a dream!—Methought Laroon was changed into a Kossa!—And there, beneath the shade, stands a brave form, bright and gleaming as if of burnished steel!—It shall not cheat my fancy, or I should say it were a man,—a living, breathing man!—But no,—the trials of the day have left me all uncertain of my reason:—I know it is a dream.”

“ Dearest Bertha, be composed,”—said

Laroon, re-clasping her trembling form :—" you see no more than a blessed reality ; it is indeed a living man :—my friend, who shares our peril even now !—the noble patriot Chieftain of the Amakossæ, the brave Makanna !"

" Our path lies open to the ocean, but the single star that lights it is clouded round with danger !—We must be bold and brief, or all may yet miscarry !"

The words of the Chieftain fell heavily on the heart of Laroon, for, in accordance with the previous plan, Miss Falkland was now to be resigned to the care of Makanna, while Paul returned to the ruin, with the purpose of raising such new alarms, as might keep Drakenstein in check until she was embarked.

A few words were sufficient to explain these particulars, and, with a confiding sweetness of obedience to the wishes of her lover, Bertha, having suffered him to kiss her mantling cheek, departed under the guardianship of his friend.

They were gone:—thus far had the plan succeeded, and yet Laroon stood as if rooted to the spot. Low booming noises, in the direction of the ruin, should have hurried him away, but a strange confused inquietude possessed his mind, and the eyes of Makanna still seemed to shine before him in the gloom, as, in the parting moment, he thought they had gleamed with the subtle light of mingled scorn and triumph.

The tumult without the ruin became more distinct, and, in a few seconds, the Creole was at his post. It appeared, that the half-intoxicated party of the Dutchman were disputing as to which of them should be put foremost, as a ‘forlorn hope,’ to re-occupy the porch, and open a communication with the pavilion. Among other voices, those of the sailors, who had just landed from the Flying-Proa were the loudest, and Laroon was just in time to hear them accede to an offer of money from old Hugo, for the service in question.

If the flight of Bertha was too soon dis-

covered, her safety would be compromised,—and yet the Creole remained in hesitation, as he could think of no expedient likely to overawe the assailant party, but one, which, from the first, he had felt desirous of avoiding, with a sort of instinctive horror,—that of firing the ‘doomed chamber’ of the bridal.

The voices from without grew louder!—he ascended the stone steps, passed the open corridor, and stood upon the threshold of the chamber. All was dark within, but not so much so, but that he was able to discern some faint traces of the festooned drapery of the bed, and, at its lower corner, a form of horror, standing erect, shadowy, motionless, and naked, and yet enough appeared to show it was, or had been, human!

Laroon hesitated—it was but the emotion of the moment, and, in the next, he had cast a lighted combustible upon the bed. A dense white smoke and lurid glare filled the apartment, revealing the sculptured forms of beauty



in its arched alcoves, and all its oriental luxury :—but other features arose, in equal and fearful distinctness ; for, in the centre, bound with thongs of hide to a gilded pillar, changed to a black and hideous mummy, remained the body of the murdered Henrik ; while, on the bed itself, still more appalling, as being less decayed, and still flesh-like, as if in mockery of life, and human sympathies, lay, as the fiend-like savages had left her—

The crackling timbers threw out volumes of sheeted flame, and, as Laroon re-passed the corridor, then filled with eddying clouds of vapour, he certainly supplied a very fair foundation for that marvellous story of the ‘ Demon of the Fire,’ which Drakenstein, in after years, was wont to relate with such solemn and vehement asseverations of its reality.

The work was accomplished, and the enemy altogether astounded, but yet Paul felt the gnawings of a wild anxiety, for she he loved was in the power of Makanna ! It



is the very vice of amorous passion to render men suspicious, even if less so by constitutional impulse than Laroon : the hauteur, the self-absorbed and rapt demeanour of the Chieftain too, at times, had baffled the Creole's best efforts to comprehend his character in all its bearings, and he had ever thought that Makanna entertained some purpose for the future, as secret yet, and unavowed.

Some time was lost in finding the opening which had been cut through the thorny barrier of the garden—it was past ; the track to the coast, though short, was intricate, from the incumbrance of timber, and detached mammocks of rock, but at last a fair view of the ocean opened on the eye. Laroon looked around with astonishment and dread, for not a vestige of the vessel, or of his friend, could be descried. Beneath a curling breeze, the sea rose regularly, as the furrows of a field, dark, short, and heavy ; while, on the offing, a shaggy wreath of storm-clouds drifted away,

followed by scattered vapoury fragments, one or two of which had all the appearance of a sail ! Laroon half fancied that it was so, and the remembrance of the fighting alligators crossed his mind with the chilling impulse of an omen.

“ Yes ! ”—he muttered—“ the ‘ two ’ that contended for the prize were baffled by the ‘ third ! ’—by that fell dissembler, whose glance of light in darkness was too much like Makanna’s !—O fool !—fool ! ”—dashing his hand upon his forehead—“ who would have trusted such a treasure to a savage ! ”

Laroon looked out again and noticed a grove of bamboos covering the bank of a creek before unobserved. A few moments were sufficient to place him beneath their shade. There were sounds—perhaps of voices ! no—he looked up ; it was but the wild sighings of the wind, and the clattering of the bamboos, as their tall elegant stems, pendant leaves, and tufted feathery blossoms, shivering and bending with every impulse of the

air, now thrashed together, or, as the wind receded, elastic rose, as if instinctive of their freedom.

The Creole broke through the crackling stems, and plunged into the water; for within some sixty yards the Proa, like a floating swan, lay beating off the wind.

“Is our volunteer rated a lubber, or before the mast?” said Makanna, feigning the familiar husky tone of an old sailor, and holding out a paddle to assist the swimmer in boarding.

“Call me ‘Supercargo,’ an’ you will,”—replied the Creole gaily—“for thank Heaven, and a bold friend, my treasure has been bravely shipped.”

“Yes, that half-deck of platted cane is the best accommodation we can boast; the Lady will find it both dry and safe.”

“But,”—rejoined the Creole, a shade of anxiety darkening his countenance—“is it possible for this light feathery craft ‘to hold her own’ in the deep hollow roll of the blue water?”

“She has, at least, no chance of slipping a bolt, or starting her sheathing; for her planks, as you see, are sewed together with sinew—she may fill, but can never sink!

“Ah!” continued the Chieftain, as drawing water abaft he luff’d her head sea-ward, “she’s a sweet creature, and a spanker too! When the gale’s steady, and not too stiff, ’twill do your heart good to see her eat up the wind. Javan, step on the out-rigger forward.” The boy understood the accompanying gesture, and obeyed it.

“Now she dips her head to the gale—no, the canvass catches too eager for the bite—let her off a point—she has it plump and home!—hold on, steady—haul sheet hard aft, the sail bellies too full for the draw—belay—she sucks like a leech—we’re off.”

And off they were in no common style, for the Flying-Proa, burying her head in a coronet of foam, shot through the flashing waters, swift as a swallow in the air:

## CHAPTER XI.

“ Once more upon the waters ! yet once more !  
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed  
That knows his rider. Welcome be their roar !  
Swift be their guidance whereso'er it lead !  
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,  
And the strained canvass fluttering strew the gale,  
Still must I on ; for I am as a weed  
Flung from the rock on ocean's foam to sail  
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.”

BYRON.

WERE the day dreams of the ‘ German Illuminati’ to be realized, with their fabled natural magic of ‘ metallic tractors,’ and the overruling agency of reciprocal sympathies,—how would a King’s Ship ever leave a Colonial station:—’Faith, the ‘ animal magnetism’ of

Love and Avarice might withstand the united winds of heaven ! if they did not fairly suck her up ‘ high-and-dry,’ altogether above tide-way.

Oh ! the dismal long faces, profound sighs, —and self-commiserating shrugs of Agents, Factors, Contractors, and Tavern Keepers, with the endless *et cetera* of cormorants, who doubtless, from profound *loyalty* alone, never deem the king’s picture in little, duly safe, unless when in their own fobs. Who when the Ship made port, felt all the joy of famishing Greenlanders at the sight of a dead whale just stranded :—and now that her stores are all on board ; her anchor tript and the gun fired for the last boat, are gnashing their teeth in the awful certainty, that the delectable delight of cheating has past away for a season, and that to live, they must *unnaturally* feed at their own expense.

But what are the lamentations of insatiable Avarice, to those of anxious or disappointed Love ! Whether it regards the refined votaries



of the 'celestial' Cupid, or those of the rosy urchin's 'terrestrial' brother, who, luckless dog, has been kicked out of all sorts of Heavens save that of the Arabian. 'Faith with both, 'tis much the same, though in a different way. No sooner is the fatal order for sailing issued, than 'angelic tears' from the one, and vulgar grog from the other, overflow to an extent, that might flood the ship's deck in spite of her scuppers.

Every fair one knows, if she has not felt, the bewitching influence of the Royal-Uniform, whether the crimson, or the blue:—how it makes the plain man handsome, and the handsome, a demi-god at once! If the crimson charm prevail, *sans* doubt he is a Mars! and if the blue, why then he ought to be a Neptune!—but no,—his Marine Godship wears a beard; beards, perchance, are impediments to kissing! and the grim old gentleman with the toasting-fork, has 'nem. con.' in 'propria persona,' at least been proscribed the Drawing-



room, that realm of feathers, flowers, and female supremacy!

Where dreams of love, and twinkling feet  
In heart-ensnaring mazes meet,  
Where glances melt to music's spell,  
And smothered sighs are felt too well;  
Where Beauty's coy reluctant touch,  
Though sheathed in kid, may tell too much!  
Tell us the weight of Passion's chain,  
Of maddening hopes, and wishes vain.

But we were speaking of the sorrows, rather than of the triumphs of Love, and alas, the latter are but too like bubbles blown by boys in the sun—the more they glitter the sooner they exhale.

Whether it be the influence of a more genial climate on 'the human face divine'—Tush! the characteristic beauty of the Dutch ladies being of that 'round-about style,' which always places a due preponderance near the centre of gravity, our phraseology must be more comprehensive. Well, let it be climate or what it will, the rotundity of the female form, as observed in Holland, has in their African-born

daughters, expanded perpendicularly into more of the oval, with that free undulating outline, constituting grace. Still there is no lack of substance; and if a girl of this race in Southern Africa has any share of beauty, it must in the most solid sense in nature be a large one!

Many of the young ladies of Dutch extraction at the Cape, having this magnificence of form, which Titian loved to paint, though by the by, it excels the Italian; for the limbs are equally fine, without the clumsiness of ankle, while the young Africanders possess withal a coy blandishment of manner most fatal to European hearts.

With temptations so ample, it was no marvel, that not a few of the officers of His Majesty's ship Goshawk had forgotten their stern vocation sufficiently to play the lover on occasion, and that presented, when taking in the stores for the homeward run had not been overlooked. Indeed the flirtations at Cape Town, from 'the elegant and careless,'

had progressed to 'the pensive and attentive,' when the order for the sailing of the frigate changed them at once into 'the fervent and pathetic.'

Not that there was any chance of broken hearts; no, no, ladies accustomed to the society of military and naval men, know that, like birds of paradise, the sojourn of such heroes is but for a season,—and are, or should be careful to 'love wisely.' But then, 'the pains of parting,' if not carried too far, are so interesting,—presenting so many more than the common chances for display!

The bosom heaving tumultuously with fond regret—the languishing eyes, so saint-like in the full languid light, that gleams the last adieu, beneath luxuriant, but neglected curls. The pressure of the hand, prolonged until the soft vibration of blending pulses thrills back upon the heart!—the whispered protestations of 'eternal love'—ratified by some 'dear keepsake;'—an ivory casket, perhaps, that cracks

with the first unlucky fall, and yet is far more lasting than the sentiment it pledged!

Such things are very pretty in a pretty woman,—but they are short as sweet; and no sooner over, than the pensive charmer brightening like an April-sun, skips up stairs to re-adjust her toilet, and put fresh papers in her hair.

All these particulars of the *tendresse* had been, and were not, except the last, which, by the by, was postponed for some ten minutes, as a fine form and graceful arm appear to no little advantage, when waving the farewell signal from the beach. Yes! the frigate had weighed her anchor, the Commodore's pendant was hoisted, and the canvass beating in the brails as the ship lay-to, having made signal for her last boat, when the crowd on the jetty were jostled by a Kossa, who pushed through with no gentle hand.

“Shove over th' tawny loon, head an' heels to the sharks!”—growled a hoarse voice.

“Avast, stunted Mic!”—cried a young pilot—“What all-aback, in the sulks, man, ’cause the Captain don’t fancy ‘double joints, an’ no brains!’—Ye’ll get prog with a Slaver yet! Black heart an’ black cargo won’t part company for long!”

“The lubber puffs as if he’d come post from Beelzebub, with a sulphur-pot in his gullet!”—said another.—“What’s that?”

Just then the Amakossæ, drawing out a leaf of ivory from a fold of his ‘unebe,’ held it aloft.

“It is inscribed for Major Falkland”—exclaimed a third—“Boat a-hoy!—A-hoy!—A dispatch for His Honour!”

“Hand it down,”—said the Cockswain of the cutter.—“Now, then, pull off again—for love an’ life, pull!—There’s little luck in a balk at starting, and we’ll ha’ th’ cat’s-paw from the Mountain yet! Pull, boys, pull!—one-an’-all—steady!”

The gale of the past night was lulled,

and the morning shone so calmly, that the sea, smooth as oil, lay hushed in one broad sheet of glassy brightness:—but yet, the Table Mountain, black as if the rugged hollows of its barren sides had been scathed with fire, frowned darkly from beneath the shadow of a heavy swath of white edged cloud, resting upon its summit.

“The Devil ha’ laid his table-cloth, certain sure!”—said the bow-man,—“and he’ll be fishing after some of us soon.”

“Hush! the cat’s out:”—said another.

“Helm hard down,—luff her round, dead on the wind’s eye.—Steady!—Hold water!”

The order was obeyed, but the attention of every man was to the Mountain. A flash of lightning shot through the gathering mirky shroud above,—the fragment of cloud, called ‘a cat’s-paw,’ became detached from the vapoury mass,—it hovered, as an eagle about to swoop, and then, melting in the air,



a sudden squall descending from the spot, tore a large space of the surrounding ocean into a waste of foam.

“ Pull away, hearts of oak !—With a will-an’-together, pull ! ”—shouted the Cockswain above the storm. For a moment, the cutter was darkened in the burstings of the surge ; but, as the oars, straining and creaking in the ro’locks, came home upon the second stroke, she shot a-head like a blown whale ; and after baling, stood off gaily through a merry tumbling sea, for the Frigate.

For several hours, the Goshawk, close-hauled in stays, made way inch-meal on a baffling wind. The evening told no better, but the ship was put rather larger for the night. The air rose fresh and pleasant from the water, and Major Falkland, with his friend, Captain Daker, came up to take a cooling turn before supper.

“ Major,”—said the latter,—“ that scratch from the ‘ cat ’ put it out of my head, but



have you looked at the ivory, that the savage pulled out on the jetty?—I'm sure I've seen the fellow before; he was one of the tawnies that came to the camp with some offer from Makanna."

"No,"—replied the Major,—“I cared not for the squall,—but my heart was too heavy with the thought of leaving my poor child a corpse in a foreign land, for me to care for anything,—that is, for anything that might befall myself.”

“That leaf of ivory was, no doubt, one of their fancied charms, and as such, a farewell gift of value in the estimation of the poor Kossa;—and yet, if I ever served him, I've forgotten it,—still, that's not strange, for now, I cannot recollect anything.—Here it is.”

“Major,”—cried Captain Daker, who had taken the leaf of ivory to the light of the binnacle;—“Major, read it yourself, there's something in this:

When dimly looms the mountain's crest,  
Let the Hawk's proud pinions rest,  
And a Dove shall ocean show,  
More precious than the pearls below.

“Yes,”—rejoined the Captain, for the Major said not a word,—“you may smile, but there's something in this.—People may say what they like, but the Prophet Chieftain of the Amakossæ has power beyond the wit of man, let him get it how he may :—this is from him, and you'd better look to't well.”

“Daker, you sailors are as credulous as bold,—the words sound to me as a sort of poetical rhapsody, without an iota of meaning.”

“Tut, man!”—cried the Captain,—“he's logg'd it down, clear as a blue light in the dark!—This is it,—‘when the Table Mountain is almost out of sight, let the ship lie-to.’”

“Well, but the Dove!”—said the Major,—“what is that?”

“Yes, that may be a question; but what

matter either, when mayhap we may know well enough before the morning. Say not a word to the Commodore, he'll only jeer; but as you're in sorrow, Major, perchance Makanna may show you the spirit of poor Bertha:—I doubt not but that he has the power, and you know that the river in which she was lost may have washed her out to sea, and it would be a comfort but to have the Chaplain read the service over her corse and then to sink it in deep water."

The bluff old seaman spoke with so much feeling that the Major, though shocked at the gross superstition he had betrayed, thanked him cordially for the friendly interest he evinced, but at the same time took care to mark his utter contempt of its intimation by casting the leaf of ivory overboard at once.

The Captain, who felt rather sulky at having confessed more than he wished, retired early to his cot, but still his faith in

the power of Makanna was too potent to give him a chance of sleeping, and when the ship was all quiet he stole upon deck.

“What, Sir,”—he said to the Second Lieutenant, who commanded the watch,—“has the gale freshened?—I make nothing but an open offing, and the ship did not travel seven knots at dusk.”

“Very true, Sir,”—replied the officer,—“I know not how it is, but the coast seems gone down all at once! and the Table Mountain too, that should loom like an island for the next two hours on the starboard, has vanished with the rest!”

“Ah, my young friend,” said Daker,—“when you have navigated the Indian Ocean as long as I have, you will cease to be surprised at any trick it may play you.

“These illusions are indeed frequently occasioned by the proximity of the immense Continent of Africa, and its influence on the atmospherical phenomenon. For instance, the

disappearance of the coast I imagine to occur from the presence of a vast sheet of aqueous vapour, which, after having drifted over the heated sands of the Desert in a transparent form, has been suddenly condensed by the cold of the ocean, and thus veiled the land behind it from our view."

Though, as has been shown, Captain Daker, on the subject of apparitions, thought with Dr. Johnson and other great authorities, yet in matters of seamanship, a better practical sailor has seldom boxed the compass, and so correct was his hypothesis on the present occasion, that the land-fog in less than an hour had settled into a compact stratum of cloud over the whole of the horizon.

"Shall we have foul weather, Captain?"—said the Lieutenant,—“the darkness equals the plague of Egypt!—’Faith, I can’t see the length of a caronade.”

“No, not any thing will come of this but heat: one of those frizzling calms when the wings

of the flying-fish will not carry him for dryness. But, for the darkness, hang out more lights, and let the bell be set on the swing;—the ship can hardly hold her own in this fly-buzz of a breeze, and, by Jove, with a stranger athwart, she'd be jambed all foul, alow-an'-aloft, before you'd have time to cun her off a point."

The hint was taken: a lanthorn swung from the crotchetyard, and the monotonous ting-tang of the ship's bell sounded solemnly into the black void around.

"What have we there!"—cried the Lieutenant, as a dim white object glided swiftly by—"no natural craft could scud at that rate in a breeze so spent as this!—and yet I'll be sworn 'twas 'a sail!—'Faith, she shall have a nine-pound shot for ballast!"

A gun was pointed, and had been fired, but that Captain Daker interfered.

"Hold, for God's sake!—What should a King's Ship hail with the shotted gun like



a Picaroon!—Besides, you're all on the wrong tack: she's natural, Sir, as flesh and blood—many's the trip I've had in a Flying-Proa before now:—rate—why I think they'll outrun the wind!—and devilish odd too that the swiftest craft that ever ploughed salt water should have been invented by Savages.

“There she is again!—right on the wind—perhaps a Malay Rover, perhaps a Dispatch Boat, or, perchance——Zounds! she's gone! Odd enough that!—Can't capsize, or founder, the hussy, if she would; and as for striking sail, what could she mean by that?”

“Well, Sir, you see she's gone!”—said the Lieutenant gravely, and with a nod, as if in confirmation of his first suspicion.

“Go, and awaken the Major, say I want him,” said Captain Daker to the cabin-boy, and began pacing the deck with an air of thoughtful impatience.

All without the ship was black as ink; and the faint light on board served scarcely



to show the few men that formed the watch; yet, here and there, a pale stern countenance evinced that they anticipated something unusual. All was so silent, that every ripple of the water against the side of the vessel told on the ear.

“Ship-a-hoy!”—shouted a deep clear voice, as from the sea itself, and right under the weather-bow—“Ship-a-hoy!”

All hands crowded to the fore-castle, when the Commodore, who was himself come up in his dressing-gown, with the Major, rubbed his eyes, exclaiming—

“What, a man overboard; off with the gratings; clear away the gig!”

“No, your Honour, but there’s a stranger alongside wants your Honour’s word for a pass.”

“Are we free to come, and free to go?” shouted the deep sonorous voice from the ocean.

“Yes, on the word of a British Seaman,”

replied the Commodore—"Throw the tackle over, and see all's fast.—Why the fellows stare as if we'd hooked a Mermaid by the gills!—Fetch me my sword and coat—and hark'ee, boy, tell the Sergeant to turn up a guard of honour—'faith, we may have Old Davy's Port Admiral to overhaul us yet!—Right, Gunner, a Bengal light will be well-timed—ay, an' another, if ye will."

In a moment the ship and sea were wrapt in a glare of lurid light, when Laroon appeared ascending, and bearing Bertha on his arm.

"God bless her!—here's the 'Dove' come to the ark indeed!—But Laroon a Kossa! and that Warrior in the Proa beneath, that seems to have changed his very flesh into armour, for 'tis bright as steel.—It is!—it must be Makanna!"

"Yes," exclaimed Laroon, as he placed his lovely, but almost inanimate charge in the arms of her father, who stood as a man

entranced—"Yes, to the bold and generous Chieftain I owe the means of redeeming my daring pledge, and that almost to the letter.

*"While yet a plank can swim, a sail can gather wind."*

"But that is over,—thank Heaven, Miss Falkland, in safety and in health, is with her father.

"Captain Daker, the explanation relative to the Ganges I yet shall find a time to give: in the mean while, as Miss Falkland has informed me of your private loss on that occasion, I would repay it with these diamonds—"

"Tush, Paul, not a word! I'll give the 'twinklers' to my little ship-mate, here, for a bridal necklace, but we shall want a 'gallant,' you know, to clasp it!—Yes, come and help to support your lady to the state-room, Mage. Faith, we'll sing 'Auld Lang Syne,' and drink 'Success to the Wedding.'"

Laroon appeared not to hear him, but

having in silence kissed the pale and tearful cheek of Bertha, was about to return to the Proa.

“Zounds an’ thunder!”—shouted Captain Daker—“is the man mad?—he would have spoken more, but turning red as a throttled turkey-cock, his very vehemence rendered articulation impossible.”

“My dear and generous friend,”—replied Laroon,—“the hopes, that are indeed my life, may point as high as your own kind wishes, but now I have no choice—’tis honour calls, and she must be obeyed—my own—my dearest Bertha will explain it all—farewell!”

At the word, the gallant Creole had slung himself into the Proa, Javan let go the warp, that held her on the ship, and in a few seconds, Makanna having trimmed her canvass to the breeze, dimly and silently she glided off into the dusky bosom of the night.

## CHAPTER XII.

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“ Ill fares the land, to hast’ning ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;  
A breath may make them, as a breath has made :  
But a bold peasantry, their country’s pride,  
When once destroy’d can never be supplied.”

GOLDSMITH.

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FULL two years had passed away since the occurrence related in the last chapter: the great defeat of the united tribes of Caffraria, under Makanna, at Graham’s Town, was become stale news in the Colony; and the more recent outlawry of the Chieftain, his surrender at Graaff Reynett, confinement in Robbin

Island, and death by drowning when attempting to escape, had ceased to *amuse* the comely 'Vrouws' of Cape Town, being totally eclipsed in the excitement attending the importation of 'a new bonnet' from Europe!—when an old soldier, who had served in Africa, turned up the London-Road from Cheltenham.

"Hark'ee, my good friend!"—cried the veteran, to a tall, bony lad, from the hills, who in a weather-stained fustian jacket, darned corduroys, with gray worsted stockings pulled up over the knees, an oilcase-hat, and half-boots marvellously well macadamized with mud, was correcting the erratic propensities of a drove of 'curly tails,'—"can you tell me if one Major Falkland lives here-about?"

"Loike enew ya' means he fram th' Indies?"—The old soldier nodded assent—

"Ay zertain zure, he's th' country talk, all thic side Burford!—a woundy grate man!—'power o' money,' 'an' gittin more everie daye 'fram poor-voke' too!"

“Thank ye, my good fellow,”—said the soldier, and trudged on.

Varied and sundry were the equipages, pedestrians, and equestrians, that passed our ‘disinherited son of Mars,’ without attracting a single glance; his whole soul being then absorbed in astonishment, as to how it was possible for ‘the generous Major Falkland’ to spend his old age in “gittin money everie daye fram poor-voke!”

The hedges garlanded with eglantine, steamed with redoubled sweetness from a recent shower, and were beautiful in the glow of their freshness; but just then, the ruts of the road still filled with water, glistened so intensely in the sun, that the soldier was glad to keep his eyes on the path, when a shadow falling suddenly from the right, caught his attention.

Perhaps he ought to have looked another way as speedily, for a blush of conscious confusion grew the deeper from his glance, as a



fine young country girl, at that instant on the equipoise in crossing a stile, stumbled in descending.

Had his regimental coat been newer, it is more than probable that a 'stolen kiss,' with the rustic adage—" 'tis as well to swing for a sheep as a lamb!"—would have brought a smile to her relief, but the gallantry of a disbanded soldier is always on the wane, yet still he found courage to break the ice by inquiring the way.

"Yes,"—said the maiden, still slouching her bonnet and throbbing like a fresh caught linnet—"the distance is very short over these fields, but the family at the Major's are all very busy just now about the wedding."

This was a second source of curiosity, and the soldier, in spite of a contraction left in one thigh from a bayonet thrust, got over the greensward in 'double-quick-time.' On arriving at the second stile, he paused to reconnoitre, for there was something in the view

that reminded him strangely of Southern Africa. The bold grandeur of Lackington Hill, with its precipitous dark shadowy side, and level summit so very like the Table-Mountain. And then the verdant dell before him, so richly interspersed with noble forest timber, plantations of ever-greens and flowery shrubs, while, in the foreground, were wild and tangled hedges of late blooming may, dog-roses, and the intertwining honey-suckle.

“Surely that cannot be the Major’s—the villas of the English gentry have too often a solitary grandeur in the extension of the ‘uninhabited domain’ around them, totally distinct from the warm social comfort of that well sheltered house in the midst of these snug cottages, with their neat thatch so picturesquely peeping out here and there, amid the foliage of teeming orchards, and each with its shady alcove, flowers, and garden, so gay and tasty. And yet the noble conservatories, the foreign looking boat and sparkling trout

stream, with lots of rustic children bathing, running races, climbing, and all full of fun and frolic, 'tis just what the Major would like?"—So at least thought the weather beaten soldier, as at last he soliloquized aloud.

"But then th' 'poor-voke!'—God bless his old heart, I see how it is,—the Major ha' laid out money in building a village on his estate for the peasantry, who, like hive-bees, are always busy and merry:—easy rents bring short payments, the 'spec' tells—and here his Honour lives as an 'English Gentleman' always should do, in the midst of grateful hearts and smiling faces!"

With these cogitations, and something like a hope of getting such a cozy little nest for himself as one of the cottages around, the veteran gave a modest tap at the door.

"You'll please to tell his Honour, that his old servant, Dimmock of the Grenadiers, would wait his orders for the favour of a 'certificate.'—You may say 'Sergeant Dim-

mock,' if you please, for I've been promoted since he left."

"Very well—come in!"—said the servant.  
"Yes! come in,"—repeated a voice of sweet and silvery tone, and the quick pattering fairy tread of 'the gay little Mage' sounded in the hall,—“Yes, I remember Dimmock, you were with the Major at the Cape, and I am sure that he will be glad to serve you. Yes, come in, and sit down in my parlour, till he is at leisure."

"Is *Mr. Frederick* in the study?"—she said to the footman, in a lower key, and with some trepidation.

"Yes, Miss,"—was the reply,—“he has been with the Major this half hour."

"Dear me!"—said Mage to herself, and sighing deeply,—“Half an hour! then I must go, at last."

The study of Major Falkland, being intended for use, was on the sunny side of the house, light, warm, and airy. There were some

choice pictures, and antique arms, with lovely Italian copies, in semi-transparent alabaster, of those delicious forms of female grace, by which Canova and his compeers have taught us more of 'the loves of the angels' than poet ever dreamt. The shelves contained most of the English classics, in sterling ungarbed editions, while the selection of modern works was ample and judicious.

Mage entered with a most unusual hesitation. The Major, in his morning gown of Chinese silk, was standing with his back to the fire ; and a respectable brisk looking young yeoman was seated at a table opposite, apparently arranging some papers.

"Well, Fred,"—said the Major,—“ I think the conveyance is clearly drawn, and the other documents show the 'Mill Farm' to be worth £200 per annum.”

"Yes, Sir,"—replied the young man, nipping his pen most egregiously broad at the moment, from having caught a glimpse of Mage.

“ Ah ! you ‘ perverse little gipsy,’ come here ! My daughter is so foolishly fond of her pet, that I must take you in hand myself, it seems !—Come, what pretence have you for divorcing poor Fred from his wits ? Do you consider, child, that he’s my ‘ steward,’ my ‘ factotum,’ and how the deuce can he discharge his duty while you leave him moping up and down like a widowed dove, and yet you love him all the while !”

“ Dear me !—I—I—never—”

“ Hush ! hush ! never was a more self-accusing stammer. Come, Fred, I’m informed that she has encouraged—authorized—very well, ‘ *permitted* ’ you to purchase the ring.”

The diffident lover had boggled out an objection to each term but the last—that, however, was not too presumptuous, and, with burning cheeks, and averted eyes, he ventured to confirm the fact.

“ Yes, yes ! a formal token, proving the ‘ capitulation’ at least ; if the little magical



fence of matrimony happens to be here, produce it as an evidence against her.

With a sad bungling trepidation, a crimson pocket-book was opened, and in its most private recess appeared a little packet of silver paper, containing the sacred emblem of conjugal love and fealty.

“Dear me!”—said Mage, somewhat reassured at the idea of riggling out of the dilemma, or ‘the plot,’ as she afterwards saucily called the Major’s kind interference:—  
“Dear me ! it’s big enough for the Irish giant.”

“Pooh ! catch hold of the little traitoress by the wrist, Fred, and put it to the proof,—never mind her flinching.”

“Take care you don’t drop the ring, Mr. Frederick,—it’s so unlucky !”—said the little dissembler, in a tone of sincere fear, and relinquishing her resistance.

Pale with contrary emotions, and half afraid of the omen, the lover held the ring



as gingerly as if it had been the gem of the Great Mogul, when Mage slyly slipt her little finger through it, and turning quickly, dropt it off, with an air of triumph, on the table.

“ Really this is too bad !”—said the Major ; —“ Do you remember the time, Mage, when your Lady told you that ‘ wit,’ and ‘ wicked’ begin with the same letter ?—She mentioned the ‘ *tenth*,’—shall it be so ?”

“ Friday’s an unlucky day,”—said Mage, demurely.—“ Dear me, I wish my lady had to fix for herself !”

“ The thoughtless expression painfully reminded the Major of his daughter’s faded cheek and drooping spirits ; but with a resumed smile he added,—“ Come, come, the blanks of this conveyance must be filled up : fix the ‘ day,’ and that date shall make Fred master of the ‘ Mill-Farm’ in your right.”

Though before treated almost as a relative, this handsome dower was perfectly unexpected,

and Mage found the struggles of modesty lost in the overgushing surprise of gratitude.

“ Pooh, pooh,”—said the Major,—“ don’t make a fuss, you’re a good little girl, and deserve what’s better, a good husband !—Hush, some one taps, step to the door, Fred, I would not have them see her tears.”

“ A packet for you, Sir,”—said the bridegroom elect: and sitting down to write, he blotted the conveyance at the first touch.

“ Ah !—What !”—exclaimed the Major,—  
“ ‘ *To be delivered immediately,*’—the hand of my solicitor in town.—What have we here !”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ The enclosed paragraph, cut out of a letter from my partner, now in Paris, will explain much. It has but just arrived, and the post will not allow me time to transcribe it, or to add a single remark,

“ Very obediently yours,

“ DAVID MALFORD.”

“ Ah, the Deuce!—let me see:—‘ The wishes expressed by our worthy client, the Major, have kept me on the look-out, and but yesterday I discovered that the object of his search is not only alive, but in Paris. He has been residing here for some time, and though known to be a person of distinction, remained ‘ incog,’ as it now appears, till his claim to the title and estates of his late Father, Count Laroon, one of the most honourable refugees of the Revolution, and who died at Guadalope, could be legally made out. The decision took place last night, and within half-an-hour the Count was on the route for England!’ ”

“ Oh, the dear Captain’s found!—I never was so happy in my life!—Oh, let me go, Fred, the dear brave Captain’s alive!—It won’t hurt me, Fred, the window is close to the ground,—she’s only on the other side of the lawn,—nobody shall tell her but myself!”

Though Mage was rather too plump to

catch an Antelope, yet joy seemed to give her wings—but all in vain! She was within fifty yards of her Lady, when the clatter of horses and the whirr of wheels was heard for a moment, and in the next the happy Bertha was folded on the bosom of Laroon.

THE END.





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